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German Indology and the Orientalism Debate

PETER GAEFFKE

CONDEMNATIONS

The ideological basis of the attacks against the Orientalists rest upon assumptions such as the following:

1. Michel Foucault

   "All knowledge rests upon injustice"
   "The instinct for knowledge is malicious"
   NGH, 163

2. Jack Derrida

   "There is nothing outside the text"
   "The signified is already in the position of the signified"
   = there is an object
   "Presence is always an error"
   = there is no subject; there is no being

3. de Man

   "What we assume to be persons in our environment are actually not persons but language"

The utter absurdity of the above statements be condemned as the following will show.

Academic Indology started with William Jones (1746-1794),Hernry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1836), and H.H. Wilson (1819-1899); James Prinsep (1799-1840) read Asoka inscriptions and he, together with Christian Lassen (1800-1876), deciphered the Pali Legends on Bhaktrian coins found by Ventura. Brian H.Hodgson (1800-1894) brought the important Mahayana manuscripts from Nepal. George Tunour (1799-1843) translated the *Mahavamsa*, the chronnicle of Ceylon.

This collection of names and facts was stated in Eugene Burnouf's introduction to his translation of the *Bhagavata Purana* from 1840. It shows clearly the dependence of Indic studies in the West on the presence of scholarly trained men in the service of the East India Company who due to the powerful position of their employer had access to the treasures of the past on the subcontinent and cooperative informants, and could make use of them. They transmitted their knowledge to others who came to learn from these newly opened sources.

It is, however, interesting to observe that in the nations with colonial presence in India the academic interest in the Indology remained restricted to a small number of tenured professors. In Oxford this was H.H. Wilson (1819-1899) and after him Monier Williams Monier (1849-1899) and in Paris Antoine Leonard de Chezy (1784-1860) and his successor Eugene Burnouf (1801-1852). Chezy's chair at the college de France remained for a long time the only academic position in Indology in France and the Boden Chair of Sanskrit at Oxford and since 1860 a chair at the University of Cambridge were the positions native British Indologists occupied throughout the nineteenth century.

Already Burnouf observed that, due to the great schools of Bonn and Berlin, Sanskrit was put on the first place of the great family of Indo-European languages and received the consecrations of German philological criticism. This point has to be taken in view when dealing with Indological studies in the context of the Orientalism debate, i.e., that Indologists of colonial nations recognized the leading role of the Indologists of a non-colonial nation, Germany.

In Germany scholarly Indology started with the reform of the universities under the Prussian Minister Wilhelm vaon Humboldt (1767-1835) who knew Sanskrit and had exchanged arguments about the use of Indic studies with nobody less than the philosopher F.W.A. Hegel. However, Indologists were not among the first professors appointed at the newly reformed universities Berlin. Bonn and Breslau. But after Napoleon was defeated and the pre-revolutionary order was confirmed and stabilized, three very remarkable men were appointed: August Wilhelm Schlegel (1818 at Bonn), Friedrich Bopp (1821 at Berlin) and Freidrich Ruckert (1826 in Erlangen). The interesting fact is that all three are known much more for work in other fields than as Indologists: August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845) is the congenial translator of all the dramas of Shakespeare into German which even today is used on German performances of Shakespeare's plays. Schlegel is also as one of the founding fathers of the romantic movement in Germany and, before his appointment in Bonn, he was private secretary to Madame de Stael, the former wife of the French Minister of Finances N. Necker. Friedrich Ruckert (1788-1866) is one of the best poets in the German language who used his linguistic talents also for the translation of the Sahname, the Arabic Maqamat, and Jaydeva's *Gitagovinda.* This latter work is still unsurpassed and translators from Persian into German envy Ruckert's work. Franz Bopp (1791-1867) was one of the founders of Indo-European linguistics, but he edited also the Nala and Damayanti episode of the *Mahabharatra,* a book from which many generations of Sanskritists learned the language. However, the really remarkable fact about these three men and some of their successors is, that they not only

belonged to the romantic generation but were themselves romantics and contributed to the movement.

This point must be well understood because on it hinges the argument that Central European Indology cannot be labeled Orientalism when we take this term in the sense of E. Said. The romantic movement was an ideological revolution which expressed its dissatisfaction with the bourgeois society by directing its view to goals outside and beyond the realities of life, not, as is widely assumed, as an escape but as an attempt to invigorate the present with the experiences of other worlds. These worlds could be found in very different directions: in the past, in nature, in the neo-platonic ideal of beauty, in language, in folk art and folk lore, etc. Beginnings, origins and unbridled originality were regarded pure and less soiled than the conventions of the present. For this reason, not an imperialistic design, Schlegel learned Sanskrit in Paris and Ruckert studied as many classical Oriental languages as he could. Schlegel's successor, the Dane Christian Lassen(1800-1876) together with a number of Orientalist scholars found that the time had come for a second Renaissance. While the first was ushered in by the Greek and Latin manuscripts which became available to men such as Petrarch, Ficino and many others had made them humanists, so the Oriental manuscripts would start a second Renaissance based on the wisdom of the East. Sentences such as these can be lifted from the founding manifesto of the forerunner organization of the German Oriental Society, about which we will have to say more later. But the same spirit speaks still today out of the seal of the American Oriental Society which bears the inscription "Ex Oriente Lux".

Around 1850 already 13 German Universities had chairs of Sanskrit and this number increased consistently. It attests to the fact that the institutions which had to provide the intellectual support and the state, which had to provide the financial means, never wavered in their support for this field of studies although the hoped for second Renaissance never materialized and Sanskrit as such had no practical use for the Central European states. The reason for the status Sanskrit could achieve in the German university landscape of the 19th century was that, similar to many other fields taught, Indolgy had shed its romantic hopes and was developing a meticulous scientific methodology.

Evidence for this is the outcome of the scholarly debate between Rudolf von Roth (1821-1895) and Theodore Goldstucker (1821-1872) about the methods of studying the Vedas. The issue was whether, as Goldstucker had proposed, the Indian commentary tradition should be made the basis of all our understanding of the text. The opposite position advanced primarily by Roth and others held that the student of the Veda needs the tools of Indo-European grammar in order to deal with its many unsolved problems. The latter approach prevailed and made

Vedic studies an exemplary scientific field equal with classical philology, the ideal of the textual scholarship throughout the 19th century. On the other hand, the scholarly success gained in this field made the German Sanskritists very self-assured and independent, if not degrading of Indian scholarship. The common opinion was that with the exception of access to new material there was nothing that could be learned from contemporary Indians, and whatever they knew was coached in such a round about and unscholarly way that it was useless to ask questions. This is not simple arrogance or bias as the Orientalist bashers would let us believe, but the attitude of a scientist who approaches the object of his studies with another mind set than his informant or is patient. And indeed, Indology went in directions completely independent from the Indian realities. A good example is that since the middle of the 19th century first in France then in Germany Buddhism became the center of interest. At this time no Indian would have taken up such a subject, for Buddhism was still anathema for all the Hindus and the term *arhat* was one of the severe insults hurled against atheistic modernists. But the European Indologists did not only study the Sanskrit sources of Buddhism but started to learn all the languages in which Buddhistic traditions are preserved, i,e., Pali Tibetan, Chinese and Central Asian Languages, Burmese, Singhalese and recently also Japanese and Thai. Even today, there are no Indian Buddhologists who can hold pace with this type of scholarship. There was also no sinister reason behind it, except scholarly curiosity, why Albrecht Weber (1825-1901), Ernst Leuman, Hermann Jacobi (1850-1937) and after him Ludwig Alsdorf (1904-1978) got interested in Jaina studies. In India nobody studied Janisim except the Jains themselves, but they were bound by sectarian restrictions and other handicaps while these few Swiz and German scholars could freely use their philological tools and make their historical observations on the material the Indian Jains were willing to give them access to.

This scientific attitude is the main reason for the unwillingness of most of the 19th century Indologists to visit the land of their studies. They were aware of the realities there because some of the professors such as Georg Buhler (1837-1898) and Franz Keilhorn (1840-1908) were former officers of the British colonial administration and knew the country better than most natives. Moreover, the sudden death of Richard Pischel (1849- 1908) who finally at the age of 59 set foot at the coasts of Madras and succumbed there to a fever, did not encourage these primarily middle class men to leave their desks for a country vastly different from the record in their manuscripts and books. Well known is Max Muller's "Benares is in my head and not in India," lesser known is Richard Garbe's (1857-1927) outcry of despair after hours of unsuccessful waiting for a manuscript

in the library of the Raja of Benaras at Ramgarh: This land needs a Prussian administration, then things would run more orderly.

By the end of the 19th century a remarkable structure of Indic learning had been erected in Europe and was solidly founded on 17 university professorships in Germany, in Vienna, Prague, etc. In addition to the achievements mentioned before there was the Grammar of the Prakrits by Pischel, Hillebrand's (1853-1907) *Mahabharata* studies. Theodore Benfey's book on the *Pancatantra* studies, Otto Bohtlingk's (1815-1904) and Carl Capeller's work on the Sanskrit dictionary, Paul Deussen's (1845-1919) interpretations of Indian Philosophy, Ferdinand Justi's (1837- 1907) work on Indian Law, etc., etc., and a new generation of promising young scholars was growing up. While the first German Indologists had gone to Paris or London to learn from French or English scholars and to make use of the new collections of Sanskrit manuscripts available only there in Europe at this time, already in 1829 a German Indologist was appointed to teach English students. This was Friedrich Rosen (1805-1835) who became professor at the University College at London. With him starts a long series of German Indologists at English institutions of higher learning. The next appointment was that of Max Muller (1823-1900) who in 1850 became professor of linguistics at Oxford. In the following year Theodore Goldstucker (1821-1872) started to teach at the University College at London. At about the same time Reinhold Rost (1822-1896) was appointed at the college or St. Augustine at Canterbury. From 1864 to 1869 he was secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and later he became Librarian of the India Office. His successor in this office was Hans Haas (1835-1882), who formerly had served as a private tutor to Lord Minto's family. From 1872 onward, he taught at the University College at London. His predecessor in this position and successor of Goldstucker was Julies Egeling (1842-1918), also a secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society who from 1875 until 1914 taught at the University of Edinburgh. There he followed Theodore Aufrecht (1821-1907) who had occupied this position since 1861. This list could easily be extended by adding the names of German Indologists in the service of the East India Company and later of the British Government in India.

However, in spite of these successes, academic Indology was not without criticism. After the attacks of Georg Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) against the *Bhagavadgita* at the beginning of the century, toward the end of the century we come across another outburst, this time in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) but Nietzsche's opponent was a tightly knit net of Classicists, who ostracized him from the guild of serious, i.e., philological, scholars of the Classics. That means, by the end of the century, there was no serious opponent left, on the contrary, one of the Indologists, Alfred Hillebrant (1853-1907), had become

Senator, Rudolf Roth and Richard Garbe (1857-1927) were elevated in the nobility. The rest enjoyed the privileges of German university professors which put them officially at an equal social rank with Generals of the army.

In the 20th century, this peaceful and self-assured idyll suffered a rough awakening, but it would be wrong to assume that the major political events of our century have basically changed the role of Indology in Central Europe

The first World War does not bring a great movement into this picture. Although Germany was defeated in 1918 and, as some of the politicians of the time liked to describe it, suffered one economic disaster after the other, the number of Indologists surprisingly increased. The Universities of Hamburg and Cologne started Indology in 1920, and at Munchen a special Institute of Indic Studies was established around the same time whereas only in the marginal institutions such as Rostock and Wurzburg no significant teaching of Sanskrit took place during these times. The complains of Theodore Benfey (1809-1881), the Jewish Professor of Indic studies at Gottingen, that his religion was the reason that he did not become a full professor until 1862, did not seem to apply anymore because at Breslau and Koln two Jewish Indologists were appointed: Otto Strauss (1881-1940) and Isidor Scheftelowitz (1875-1935). Hans Heinrich Zimmer (1890-1943), Walter Ruben (1899-19xx), and Otto Stein (1893-1942), all Jews, joined them at Heidelberg and Hamburg and Prague.

This period is characterized by names such as Heinrich Lueders (1869-1943), Willibald Kirfel (1895-1964), and Walter Schubring (1881-1969). They represent the acumen of meticulous textual scholarship and from their prestigious positions at Berlin, Bonn, and Hamburg saw to it that only linguistically and phonologically first class Sanskritsts got a chance to become tenured professors. Deviations from the strict philological method were regarded as a sign of unprofessional behavior. When Willibald Kirfel published his *Dreikopfige Gottheit*, the guild judged him senile and no more in possession of his former sharp intellect. In the same manner because of his book *Kaunstform und Yoga* (1926), Hans Heinrich Zimmer lost credibility among his colleague long before his Jewish descent became an issue. From the students in the first semester to senior professors, everybody was judged according to whether he adhered to a general standards and did not say or write anything that was not supported by the texts. This standard worked as the rule in patronage of students, in the promotion of young scholars, in the awarding to research grants and review articles, and, of course, in the grape wine of correspondences and scholarly meetings. It is reflected also in the books of this time which were regarded masterworks. And this they were indeed, although some of them are plainly unreadable. I name here only Walter Pischel's Prakrit Grammar, Henirich Luder's *Varuna und die Wasser*, Walter Krifels *Indian*

Cosmology, and Schubring's work on the Jaina Canon. This basic attitude for the exactness of detail, the richness of material and the careful avoidance of unwarranted generalizations prevented these scholars from writing general surveys.

However, the first survey of the achievements of Indology had been already written by Christian Lassen and was published between 1847 and 1862. It appeared under the title *Indische Altertumskunde*. After him scholars turned to the minutiae of special research. The next and really successful "popularizer" of classical India was Helmut von Glasenapp (1891-1963), a gentleman scholar with wide contacts to the leading politicians in India. But among the German Indologists he counted as a light weight, and my teacher Paul Hacker (1913-1979) found always new words to describe Glasenapp's basic misunderstanding of Hinduism while other scholars of Indian philosophy criticized that he treated his sources superficially only and others not at all.

One can call this guild-like conduct, however, what I said about the twenties, applies as well into the fifties and sixties and between these decennia lies the most trubulent period of modern Eurpoean history. Looking at it from the angle of Indology one thing is noteworthy : there was no direct attempt by the Nazi state to influence teaching and writing. What happened in the Indological seminaries in the twenties, went on in the thirties, some of the colleagues found the Aryan connection so attractive that they published and taught prehistory according to the Nazi ideology in their Indological classes. The names are not those of the famous Indologists but rather middle level shcolars. In Germany these were W. Wust (1901-19xx) in Munchen and, at Tubingen, J.W Hauer (1881-1962), a former missionary who joined the German Religious Movement, and who in his aggressive anti- Christian attitudes tried to prove the Nordic roots of yoga and other Indian practices. Wust, however, a lexicographer, came to his classes in SS uniform and made his students stay in attention while he went through a Nazi ritual before lecturing. Both did not surface after the Second World War again in teaching positions, a fact which by no means should imply their irrelevance.

On the contrary, due to such people and many others, it happened that in their membership meeting of August 8, 1938, the German Oriental Society decided : "Based on the relevant laws of the Reich, the board of directors peroposes a change in paragraph three of the bylaws : 'German subjects can only become members if they are citizens of the Reich or are preliminarily declared to be citizens of the Reich'." The laws of the Reich mentioned here are the infamous Nurnberg Laws which were designed to exclude Jews from the public life in Germany. The minutes of this meeting note that this proposal was unanimously accepted. I spare you to read the names present at this meeting.

I talked to one of them and he said that under the prevailing circumstances nothing else was possible. I raised the possibility of a vote to dissolve the Society in order not to take the enforced vote. But he said, all the professors were officers of the State and had pledged alliance to the "Fuhrer" with an oath, they did not want to be fired. So instead of resistance against an evil power, one reads in the records of the German Oriental Society about resignations of scholars such as Heinrich Zimmer, Isaak Markon, Hary Torcyner, and others. The State, however, to show his power, was not satisfied with the quoted change in the bylaws and insisted on an additional phrase to be published in the papers of the society reading : "or if they fulfill the conditions to become citizens of the Reich because of their descent."

Of course the exclusion from the German Oriental Society so horrible it sounds today would have been a small evil. However, the stake took much devastating steps against the Jewish colleagues. They were deprived of their status of German officials and that meant dismissed from their tenured positions. More terrible things waited for them. Heinrich Zimmer could leave in time for America where he found a congenial soul in A. Coomaraswami. Also Isidor Scheftelowitz, who was a prominent Rabbi of the Jewish community at Koln, died in london in 1934 and Walter Ruben found a refuge in Turkey. Others were unable to escape : Otto Strauss was caught up by the brown tide in Holland where he perished in 1940, and Otto Stein, the successor of Moitz Winternitz at the German University of Prague, perished in the concentration camp of Lodz. I know it would not be fair to name the ones who profited from the positions opened by the ouster of their Jewish colleagues. But these positions survived the Nazi period, the war and post-war turbulence, at least in West Germany, for Western Germany was a legalistic state and one of the German university administrators once told me : to establish a position is difficult, but when it is once established, it is practically impossible to abolish it. This was true, of course, only about West Germany which made it a point to return to pre-nazi legal conditions as an attempt of stability after a time of utter lawlessness. In East Germany, however, this argument did not count, because there one had one's own recipe for a better society and that meant the downfall of Indology in the Eastern part of Germany.

When the Second World War progressed, it became more and more difficult to make a case for Indic studies. But something which served as an eye-opener to this guild of philologists. This was the appearance of Subhas Chandra Bose in Germany during the war, who if he did not save Indology, but he, definitely, saved the lives of many Indologists. The Indian National Army (INA), he had formed from Rommel's prisoners of war in the fall of 1941, needed interpreters and who was more apt to do the job than the academic

Indologists. It was to their advantage that Bose had negotiated with Hitler, that the INA would only fight the British and preferably on Indian soil and under no conditions see action in Russia. Instead of being drafted into the fighting army, this arrangement made an assignment of a German Indologist to the NIA something like a sojourn on a peaceful island in the middle of a stormy ocean. The Indian Legion was first stationed near Berlin, later (1943) in Holland, and finally near Bordeaux. Around this Indian unit and Bose's diplomatic and propaganda staff in Berlin a whole German support apparatus grew, its top was in the Foreign Office and its tentacles reached into the very platoons of the Hindustani soldiers. On all these levels, Indologists and specialists on Islam were employed as advisors and interpreters and so survived the war by the grace of Netaji. Their list is long and their stories are colorful. It was here that the Private Leopold Fischer could practice his linguistic talents and Indian habits that after Germany's collapse the British took him for a Kashmiri Brahman. Two years later he became Swami Agehananda Bharati (1923-1980), and after this Professsor of Anthropology at Syracuse University. In the capacity of a translator, the Indologist Gustav Roth (1916-) spent several years with the NIA. Later he became the Abbot of the University of Nalanda. In the camps of the NIA, Otto Spiess (1901-1981) and Ernest Bannerth concocted their Hindustani Grammar a mixture of village and army slang and high flown Persian expressions, because their informers were illiterate farmers from U.P. and Panjab and these two scholars were specialists of Arabic and Persian literature. In 1941 Ludwig Alsdorf, the only Sanskritist who had written a survey book on India which included the most recent statistics he could lay his hands on, was drafted into the 'Special India Unit' of the Foreign Office which coordinated and supervised the activities of the Indians in Germany.

Did this brush with the Indian realities have any impact on German Indology in general ? From Agehandanda's recollections it becomes clear that most of the German liaisons kept a distance to the Indians, who were mostly illiterate, because their former officers and NCOs had not followed Bose's call to turn their coats. Agehandanda goes so far as to say that most of the circa 4000 soldiers of the Indian Legion did not even belong to the former fighting units of the British Indian Army but were cooks, tailors and other support personnel. This fact could have increased personal contacts and sympathy from the Indologist for this stratum of the Indian society but, instead, it instilled more feelings of superiority because the command over the classical languages of India and their literatures made the German Indologistis immediately persons of authority among the Indian soldiers and even gave them a priestly status. More important, then these experiences was the disastrous outcome of this first but intensive

encounter of his first but intensive encounter with Indian realities. All the political choices the Indologists could and did make turned out to be wrong : They had chosen for Subhas Chandra Bose, a looser, whose political aims are very questionable eve now. Moreover, the Foreign Office, especially the Special India Unit with its then Head* von Trotha, was one of the centres of the conservative resistance against Hitler and Bose and his Indians were just pawns in this dangerous game. So, in 1944 before the very eyes of the Indological specialists in Berlin, after the abortive attempt of assassination of Hitler, his gruesome and bloody revenge took place. It is no wonder that after the war, German Indologists approached modern India and its violent political issues with special caution.

It was much safer to fall back on contacts made already before the war. This applies to the more senior Indologists who had experienced longer stays in India before the war, e.g., Paul Thieme (1905-), Ludwing Alsdorf and Helmut von Glasenapp. They had adopted Brahmanical attitudes. Their work with the most prestigious texts of the Hindus and Jains had given them direct access to the traditional Indian intellectual upper class and this they took as a confirmation for the intrinsic power of the philological method. So there was no doubt that after the war academic Indology should continue as before. The professors newly appointed in fifties prove this: Frank Richard Hamm (1920-1973), Paul Hacker (1913-1979), F. Bernhard (1931-1971), Wilhelm Rau (1922-). But the establishment of the Indian Union and a beginning exchange of scholars on a regular basis made the problem of an extension of the limits of scholarly research unavoidable. In a *Denkschrift zur Lage der Orientalistik*, the German Oriental Society adopted the ideas of the leading German Indologists and asked for the establishment of many new professorships in modern Indology. Of course, this did not happen at that time. In 1956 at the conclusion of a detailed report on Sanskrit and allied Indological Studies in Europe V. Raghavan stated : "Oriental studies have generally been carried on in a textual, and often times cold ponderous manner and conducted in seclusion so that they have failed to reach the larger public or enthuse the common people" (p.82). Of course, Raghavan let 'the monkey out of the sleeve' when throughout his book, he praised the *swamis* in Europe for their excellent work in spreading Indian culture. But in the whole of Europe, Indologists became worried about the small number of their students, the rapid development of Social Studies claiming to have better explanation for all relevnat questions and, consequently, they feared that the resources allotted to them by their respective governments would ultimately dry up.

Let us now consider how the German Indologists responded to these pressures. In Western Germany, being a Federal Republic, the responsibility for higher education was with the State Governments. But the initiative to expand

the research of Indology into more modern areas did not come from the Indologist but from some of the many scholars of Social Science. Science and Medicine were interested in the modern developments in India, and together with the State Government of Baden Wurtemberg a new institution for interdisciplinary research, the Sudasien Institute at the University of Heidelberg came into being. This institution was modeled somehow after the South Asia Regional Studies Department at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Its purpose was the research of contemporary problems of South Asia. The classical Indologist Ludwig Alsdorf and Paul Hacker were asked to join the new institution. Both declined, Hacker with a very critical reply concernging the whole concept of this new institution. And right from the beginning the ingrained feelings of the German *ordinarii* (full professors) who wanted to be the directors of a one-professor, one-secretary institute with its own budget, made cooperation beyond the boundaries of the disciplines difficult. By the Heidelberg institute, in the first enthusiastic surge of common strength four projects were proposed to the German Council of Research: (1) the Dhanbad project for research on the Indian coal industry; (2) the Orissa project for the research on the interaction of temple and society exemplified by the Jagannath temple at Puri; and two projects in Thailand dealing with agricultural issues. The Dhanbad project which ran from 1969 to 1972, employed 25 persons, among them five Indians; the Orissa project which started in 1970 was staffed with 15 persons, three of them Indians. The members of the Sudasien Institute were not sufficient in number to man these major endeavors. They were replenished by scholars from elesewhere with temporary contracts. This created a number of continuity problems. Moreover, the preparations, paperwork and logistics put a heavy burden on the members of the institute. German Indology had never before undertaken such large operations, although the history of Classical Archaeology of the 19th century offers already examples of a number of successfully executed large scale operations. The Heidelberg projects were clearly an advantage for many of the members of the institute and are still today emulated by other institutions. However, the human factor, culminating in the 1977 death of Anncharlott Eschmann from malaria contracted during the Orissa project and certain allegations against members of the staff who were alleged to have misused their privileges, deamped the original enthusiasm. Moreover, inside the Sudasian Institute a major conflict developed about the Thailand projects which factually destroyed the original organization of the Institute. The State Government concluded that a fruitful cooperation between the professors of the institute was no more possible and ordered the break up of the institute into many small units attached to various traditional administrative sections (departments). What remains is comparable to one of our Graduate Groups. At present, the Institute functions

primarily as a facility for the various publication series and as an administration for a branch institute attached to the Max Muller Bhavan in New Delhi. The emphasis is now again on the research of individual scholars, and indeed the most remarkable achievement of the Heidelberg scholars is the work on Burushaski by the Sanskritist and Iranist Hermann Berger (1926-), the studies of Maharashtrian folklore by Gunther Sontheimer (1934-1992) and the solid historical research on the rulers of Orissa by Herman Kulke, who is now Professor at Kiel University. *By the way, in this silly, but often mentioned article on Indology by *Ronald Inden, Kulke, was called a romantic and linked with Christian liberalism, analytic psychology, religious foundations, self-help institutions, conscious theories, and tourism. It seems as if Inden has prematurely become Derrida's clown who is supposed to appear as critic but only after grammatology has destroyed the fallacy of opposition.* The widely advertised publications published by the Heidelberg Institute, however, are of mixed quality due to the fact that the strict criteria of the traditional Indologists were never consistently applied in the selection of manuscripts for publication.

In 1981 a conference was held in Tubingen on Indo-German cooperation in the field of Indic studies. This time R.K. Sarma and R.C. Dvivedí gave the Indian "Perspective." Their contribution was that Indology in Europe would be better of when scholars would study Sanskrit as a living language and familiarize themselves with the achievements of modern Sanskrit writers, e.g. the *Kristubhagavatam* by Devasya, one of the *poetae laureati* of the Sahitya Akademi (p.29). The final resolution of the conference, however, treated this proposal with silence. Instead, Sontheimer and Tivari outlined their concept of modernization : documentation of folk-rites threatened by extinction due to Westernization, and Jaina studies which are today as actual as hundred years ago.

While the modernists at Heidelberg have returned to traditional Indology, the classical Indologists elsewhere developed their version of modern cooperation. Following the example of the very successful venture of the Orient Institute at Beirut, an undertaking of the German Oriental Society with money from the Federal Government, the Indologists proposed to the Society a similar project for Nepal with the main purpose of microfilming the Royal Library of Kathmandu. While the Beirut Institute about which nothing than good can be said succumbed to the civil war in Libanon and had to be evacuated to Turkey to be resurecred recently in Beirut again, the Nepal branch flourishes and has photographed so far more than 500 000 manuscripts in Kathmandu and elsewhere in Nepal. The huge collection of microfilms of these manuscripts at Berlin has become a condition *sine qua non* for any research on Sanskrit texts and the enormous experience of history and living traditions in a country unspoiled by colonial

interference has helped to give young German Indologists a leading edge, e.g., at the appointment of one of the former directors of the Nepal institute, Michael Wizel to the chair of Sanskrit at Harvard.

In France and England there were similar attempts for modernization which took very different turns according to the national diversities. In France the concentration on Indic studies remained restricted to Paris and there the number of professorships extended only marginally. The overall policy toward research in this country resulted in a mammoth institutional organization like an academy which provides numerous scholars with a regular income and practically does not ask what they do in their *sine cura.* Under this umbrella numerous specializations can be exercised although with each new government and each budgetary cut a shiver runs through all scholars whether the axe may fall now or not. For the time being no essential cuts have been done, however, the Indological section of the French institute at Pondicherri escaped its demise just so.

Most of us are familiar with the pre-Thatcher expansion of modern Indic studies in England where every newly founded university had to have an Indic department, of course without Indology but crowded with Social Scientists. Already in*....., we hear complains about regional specialists for South Asia without command of a South Asian language and any training in South Asian history. Most of those "specialists" were unemployable. So it was no wonder that the restriction in funding of the universities in England caused the demise of many of these institutes and left classical Indology in the old universities only, but in a very precarious state indeed.

But it would be a mistake to assume that just the amassing of endless material such as the Nepal films which still are only roughly catalogued and contain numerous medieval compilations of well-known texts, constitutes the basis on which the self-esteem of the Indologists rests today. After the second World War and very carefully indeed, a discussion started to develop about the purpose of Indological research. A starting point was the question whether Kirfel's text critical approach to the Puranas and Luder's dealing with the Rsyasrnga myth was really the last word Indology had to say about such issues. Although Paul Hacker said that in both cases invaluable results were achieved, he did not agree that we have to be satisfied with the bits and pieces into which Kirfel had dissected the Puranas nor have we to accept with Luder's that the oldest version of the Rsyasrnga myth is also the most valuable one and all the other versions are merely derivatives. In his study of the Prahlada myth Hacker showed how its various versions represent different trends in Indian thinking and on the basis of them he proposed a relative chronology for most of the major Puranas. His

studies gave the later periods of Indian religion and philosophy new importance but more than that he had shown what creativity in the Indological discipline really means. The time of adding just another text or commentary to the existing corpus, or translating once more a well-known work or a minor manuscript, is over when achievement in the field is to be measured. There must be a new insight or new material has to be introduced which sheds new light on well-known cocepts. Hacker made many enemies among his colleagues with his merciless criticism of mindless historicism and purposeless textual criticism, however since his death in 1979 not only conferences were held discussing his ideas but also his criteria for meaningful textual scholarship have guided many of the younger Indologists.

Despite many voices to the contrary, namely, that German Indology is responsible for the idea of Aryan supremacy, the symbols of the Nazi movement, and consequently for the crimes committed in its name, the above makes it clear that the enterprise of German Indology in the 19th Century was not to transform knowledge about India into a political weapon of nationalism and racism. The Indological interests throughout the 19th century retreated more and more in highly specialized arcana and actually shunned popularization of recoveries and results of research. If one wants to find the forerunner of these evil trends of European ideology one has to look for people without scholarly training who appropriated bits and pieces of scholarly research for their scholarly constructs. From Friedrich Forster to Alfred Rosenberg, there is an ample crop of them. But there were also others such as Buddhist societies, Vedanta societies etc. who made a gentler use of the fruits of Indological scholarship. One complains that the Indologists did not forcefully resist the misuse of their findigns. But it is more likely that they did not take notice of the plethora of popularization and misappropriation of their work. They went on according to their own rules of excellence and appointed professors with no regard of their race until the Nazis took power.

It is, however, plausible to claim that this sort of Indology until recently marginalized the study of modern India (caused by the limited access to the country and the easy availability of manuscript material in Europe) and created a scholarly view of ancient South Asia exclusively from a mostly Brahmanical point of view. This body of knowledge excluded non-brahmanical cultures, especially in South India, and Muslim India as a whole. But it has to be said also, the mastery of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit and later of the Southeast Asian and East Asian languages of Buddhism was more than a single scholar could master. Moreover, from their Eupropean students, the texts in Sanskrit required an extraordinary amount of asceticism in order to understand them properly,

which simply did not leave time to acquire other languages (e.g. Persian, Tamil and some of the host of modern Indian idioms) which would have opened the doors to those neglected parts of the past and present of South Asia we just mentioned. However, if the Germans had started Indology like the Americans did, i.e., from the other end, trying to grasp the truth with the help of Sociological and Anthropological methods, the desert of ignorance about the Indian past would have spread over Europe and America. But now it is at least possible to counter the lofty constructs of Social Sciences with textual evidence prepared by those assiduous scholars of the past, an evidence which does not testify for the whole but surely for a major part of the past. And so it is the task for future generations of scholars all over to fill the gaps which are left by previous scholarship as far as it is possible.

I really don't know what to say about a man who enjoys the freedom of speech of the Western world and declares that "knowledge rests upon injustice" while it was unjust ignorance which destroyed the just knowledge of the Jewish Indologists in the thirties. Nothing but barbaric injustice could declare their presence an error to be blotted out. If anything is to be learned from my "logocentric" history, it is that whenever the person, instead of being celebrated as the presence of being, is reduced to a trace and that is to say to nothingness, it is very likely this person will not become just language but will end up literarily on the ash heap of another tyrannical regime.

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Theodore Lipps, Aesthetic Empathy, and the Self-Other Problem

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Like Marx's "spectre haunting Europe," the Cartesian self continues to haunt Western philosophy and, increasingly, global culture, awakening efforts to challenge its exaggerated subject/object dualism. As long recognised in the Asian philosophical tradition, the Cartesian self can be attacked from two sides: in terms of its failure to recognize the deeper ontological unities which transcend self and other (as noted, for example, in the Vedantic tradition), and in reference to the "ontological fissures" which open up when the concept of the ego is carefully studied (as observed specially by the Buddhists).

A different angle of criticism comes from aestheticians, who have often held that there is a kind of "overcoming" of the subject/object chasm in the experience of art. A particularly intriguing, and largely overlooked form of this argument is offered by Theodore Lipps, a turn of the century German cognitive psychologist and philosopher. Lipps is perhaps best known for bringing into popular parlance the term "empathy" (*Einfuhlung*). His theory of aesthetics, that all aesthetic perception involves an empathizing or "in-feeling" of the aesthetic object has been roundly criticised as both took weak and too strong. Lipps even earned perhaps the greatest mark of distinction, or disgrace, for any philosopher when a logical fallacy was designated to identify his alleged fundamental error. He is held to have committed the "pathetic fallacy, "viz., the fallacy of attributing animate feelings, qualities or powers to inanimate objects. As a result of these and other criticisms, few of his writings have even been translated from the original German. I wish, nonetheless, to suggest that Lipps brings to out attention an intriguing phenomenon which has value for those who seek to counter and rethink Cartesian dualism. It is especially of interest to re-read him now, in light of the many angles of attack on the self-other problem which have originated since the turn of the century.

Taken as a definition by which to characterize all aesthetic experience, Lipps' approach is readily defeated by the clever counter example. It is a misreading, however, to classify him simply as yet another in the long line of those who attempted to supply necessary and sufficient conditions for the aesthetic. Overlooked in the rush to judgement and criticism is the phenomenon Lipps sought to carefully clarify, viz., the experience of aesthetic empathy. As described

by Lipps, this experience offers an important bridge between the self, that creation of uniquely modern life, thinking and being and the seemingly all too distant other. Like Tolstoy and others, Lipps asserts that it is through the vehicle of the work of art, as an occasion for empathy, that a healing of the self-other relation can occur.

> But art can find and help us to feel what is human in all that, the positively human vitality, strength, power of volition, work, in short, activity. And all of this can find an echo in us and can satisfy a yearning in us. For all the yearning we feel can be comprised in one word: it is the yearning to live (EAP, 412).[1]

Lipps' Concept of the Empathic Process

Lipps begins (EAP, 403) by distinguishing three types or directions of enjoyment. (1) "I enjoy a thing or a sensuous object distinct from myself, (2) "I enjoy myself, for example, my power or my skill". These first two forms exhibit the subject/object structure in which modern humans find themselves entangled. However, Lipps adds a third form of enjoyment, (3) "I enjoy myself in a sensusous object distrinct from myself" (what he refers to as "objectivated self-enjoyment"). This third form of enjoyment occurs through empaty: "empathy means, not a sensation in one's body, but feeling something, namely, oneself, into the esthetic object" (EIIS, 381).

Lipps' theory of "empathic projection" is built around the concept of life as "activity" (*Aktivitat*). Lipps begins by expressing a form of the German romantic view of life as *Streben*—striving, meeting resistance, throwing oneself against and immersing oneself in the obstacle :

> What I empathize is, in the most general sense, life itself. And life is power, inner working, striving, achieving. In one word, life is activity : free or inhibited, easy or arduous, at one with itself or in inner conflict, tense or relaxed, concentrated in a point or scattered and 'losing itself' in manifold vital activity (EAP, 404).

Empathy, in turn, is initiated by an often involuntary, natural or instinctual inner imitation of the observed vital activity of another. For example, I see another person extend and hold out their arm; it becomes an object of my concentrated attention.

> Now I again feel a striving. Possibly I realize this striving. I imitate the movements. In doing so I feel active. I feel the effort, the resistance to obstacles, the act of overcoming, the joy of succeeding. I feel all this actually. I do not merely imagine things of this sort (EIIS, 378).

I can empathize (with) other people (e.g., I inwardly strain along with the acrobat or dancer), with animals, and even with inanimate objects and structures (e.g., I

empathize with the column holding up weight, or with the concert hall stretching out its cavernous space). Most importantly for our purposes, I empathize with the work of art, a human creation whose formal qualities evoke in me a vicarious action tendency which draws me out of myself and into the artist's production.

Though I can actively seek to imitate what I observe in the object or other, the most genuine form of empathy is the nonvoluntary kind. This empathizing is, at its roots, a physiological (or as Lipps calls it, a "kinesthetic") phenomenon. Here Lipps appears to have been influenced by the James-Lange approach which construed emotion as a subjective awareness of felt physiological tensions or changes. As such, what is felt in empathy is both physically-based, and dynamic or action-oriented--a kind of physical participation in the vital activity of the other.

While empathy produces a kind of "physical mimicry" in me, the spectator, its intentional focus does not remain on my body. "Empathy means, not a sensation in one's body, by feeling something, namely oneself, into the esthetic object" (EIIS, 381). The more I give myself to contemplating the seen movement, the more involuntary and, in sense, selfless, is the movement which I experience in myself.

> In a word, I am now with my feeling of activity entirely and wholly in the moving figure. Even spatially, if we can speak of the spatial extent of the ego, I am in its place. I am transported into it. I am, so far as my consciousness is concerned, entirely and wholly identical with it. Thus feeling myself active in the observed human figure, I feel also in it free, facile, proud. This is esthetic imitation and this imitation is at the same time easthetic empathy (EIIS, 379).

This leads Lipps to an admittedly paradoxical relation between the aesthetic object and the self which contemplates it. On the other hand, "the sensuous appearance of the beautiful thing is certainly the object of easthetic enjoyment, but just as certainly it is not the ground of it. Rather the cause of esthetic enjoyment is myself, or the ego; exactly the same ego that feels joyous or pleased 'in view' of the object or 'opposite' it" (EIIS, 375). On the other hand, I have these feelings not in myself, but in the object. Empathy is not a feeling "related to an object," The object of aesthetic experience, and also its ground, is the ego, but only insofar as it is "bound up with the sensuously perceived figure" (EIIS, 376). In aesthetic imitation, "I become progressively less aware of muscular tensions or sense- feelings in general the more I surrender in contemplation to the esthetic object" (EIIS, 380).

> Empathy is the fact here established that the object is myself and by the very same token this self of mine is the object. Empathy is the fact

that the antithesis between myself and the object disappears, or rather does not yet exist (EIIS, 376).

Lipps goes out of his way to stress the "identity" between self and object in esthetic empathy : "in esthetic imitation this opposition is absolutely done away with. The two are simply one" (EIIS, 379).

Lipps Criticized

This claim of "identity" opened up the door to a variety of criticisms. Gilbert and Kuhn, in their *History of Aesthetics*, claim that Lipps is expressing little more here than a kind of German romantic mysticism or "magical idealism" (Novalis) in which the self is absorbed into its object of devotion.[2] That is, given the history of German romanticism, Lipps is only imparting scientific contours to a phenomenon long known and described. I would propose, however, that Lipps brings the phenomenon to a new kind of clarity through his introduction of the concept of "empathy." Though one finds illustrations of empathizing, one does not find the kind of detailed description of the process in earlier writings in the German aesthetic tradition.

More specific criticisms come from opposite standpoints. Edith Stein, in her important study, *On the Problem of Empathy*, singles out Lipps's theory as an example of the confusion of sympathy with "identification". On Lipps's view of the identity of the felt and the *eingefuhlt*, what is occuring in my body and in the foreign body "would then remain completely obscure, since I am living 'in' the one in the same way as in the other".[3] Lipps overlooks the distinction between one's own "primordial" experience and the non-primordial experience of the other.

> I am not one with the acrobat, but only 'at' him. I do not actually go through his motions but *quasi*. Lipps also stresses, to be sure, that I do not outwardly go through his motions. But neither is what 'inwardly' corresponds to the movement of the body, the experience that 'I move,' primordial; it is non-primordial; it is non-primordial for me. And in these non-primordial movements I feel led, accompanied by his morvements... What has led Lipps astray in his description was the confusion of self-forgetfulness, through which I can surrender myself to any object, with a dissolution of the 'I' in the object. Thus, strictly speaking, empathy is not a feeling of oneness.[4]

Lipps thus pays insufficient heed to the different between self and other.

A criticism from the opposite side comes from Max Scheler in *The Nature of Sympathy*. Scheler attacks Lipps for fostering an "analogical" view of the other's personhood which fails to bridge the gap between self and other. Employing empathy to understand the other's experience is an unnecessarily

circuitous route to their personhood, something which must be presupposed were empathy to function at all.

> That we cannot be aware of an experience (of another) without being aware of a self is something which is directly based upon the intuitable intrinsic connection between individual and experience; there is no need of empathy on the part of the percipient.[5]

Lipps has thus been criticized for forgetting the self-other distinction and for exaggerating it. It will not be easy for him to please his critics.[6]

Lipps defended

Lipps might be criticized for reinforcing the subject/object dichotomy if he maintained that it is empathy which first brings a pre-existing independent self into contact with its separately existing object. Unfortunately, he does sometimes give this impression, for example when describing a kind of "humanistic appreciation" of the other which arises from the empathic experience. These humanistic consequences of empathy are articulated when Lipps tackles the problem of how we can derive aesthetic enjoyment from the represented despair or suffering of others. He proposes that to experience the inner depths of another, even in despair "is an experiencing of some whole personality with its woe and despair, with its whole power and inner activity, with its effort and exertion" (EAP, 411). Enjoyment comes as an "echo of this human being in me, an inner yea-saying to this being" (EAP, 411). Even in another's suffering, I experience "the concealed gold of humanity" (EAP, 411). "It allows me to experience and to feel the essentially human even in the dreadful...I see what is at bottom positive in it" (EAP, 412).

None of this precludes an initial (pre-empathic) openness or directedness to the personhood of the other. Empathy need not provide "the first ontological bridge from one's own subject, which is given proximally and alone, to the other subject, which is proximally quite closed off" (Heidegger).[7] Recall that Lipps declares, "empathy is the fact that the antithesis between myself and the object disappears, *or rather does not yet exist*" (EIIS, 376, italics mine). Lipps dodges the question of what interests us in the empathized object in the first place, referring this to an instinctually-mediated process conducted below the threshold of consciousness.[8] Like both Scheler and Heidegger, Lipps allows for the possibility of a "disguisedness" of this directedness to the other due to the prevalance of the Cartesian conception of self and object. Empathy would then serve the humanistic purpose described above, revealing the "concealed gold of humanity" through what at first (falsely) appear to be mere material objects.[9] That empathy effectively addresses a kind of false objectification of the other does not imply

that it does not, itself, rely upon a prior (but perhaps forgotten) orientation towards others.

Regarding the charge that Lipps' empathy amounts to a kind of identification, careful reading of Lipps reveals that he seeks to preserve some type of distinction between self and object after all. He notes, for example, that in an unimitative act, the "real" self acts, i.e., "my total personality as it is actually disposed at the time." In aesthetic imitation, "quite differently, the self is an ideal one" (EIIS, 379). Lipps acknowledges the difficulty with this adjective, hedging as follows: "This ideal' self, too is real. But it is not the real 'practical' self. It is the contemplative self, lingering and merged in the contemplation of the object" (EIIS, 379).[10] Lipps is eager to make clear that the self remains capable of distinguishing the difference between "reality"and "the aesthetic", and between "self" and "other", which would not be the case in true identification. He argues repeatedly that in aesthetic experience, I am aware that it is with a *represented* object that I empathize; I thus "remove it to an ideal realm" (EAP, 412) which has no power to move me to "practical action."

This apeal to the ideal/real distinction is probably ill-advised. If my real self is unaffected by art, this seems to take away from the claim that "I am completely and wholly carried away from this sphere of my experience" (EIIS, 380). Surely the physiological imitative processes and action tendencies provoked by empathy are "real" as well, even if they don't prompt the physical actions which would fulfill them.

Perhaps Lipps' view can be better understood if it is seen as combining a strongly physiological process of involuntary, instinctual imitation with a Kantian/Husserlian notion of the individual as actively constituting and constructing his/her world.

> Everything, therefore, which exists as some particular thing—and other objects simply do not exist for me—is necessarily and self-evidently permeated by my life. This then is the commonest signification of 'empathy.' It means that when I grasp an object, as it exists and indeed must exist for me, I experience an activity or kind of self-activity as an attribute of the object (EAP, 407).

This begins to sound very much like Lipps has fallen after all into the solipsistic trap Husserl tried so hard to escape. "The sensuous appearance of a person is for me pleasant or unpleasant, beautiful or ugly, because first of all in it there is a kind of life—an evocation of my own experience, and experience of my self, an activity of the inner being" (EAP 410). Yet "in seeing care, anxiety, despair, I see a person who feels these things in himself, and when I see him or experience him, *he introjects himself into my experience.* Artistic depiction

has evoked an experience of him" (EAP, 410, my italics). In line with the traditional notion of aesthetic judgement as "disinterested, " Lipps proposes that this is the virtue of aesthetic empathy, that it "leads me and forces me, the observer, to step out of and beyond myself" (EAP, 412).

Lipps' paradigm, then, appears to revolve around a form of physiological activation, aroused as I relentlessly search out my environment, which yields a subjective experience. The more purely aesthetic the encounter, the more the international focus of this experience is drawn powerfully to the other. Simultaneous with this, a lingering awareness that the experience is an aesthetic one is generated by the felt action of "representing," projecting one's kinesthetic experience back onto the object. In a paradoxical manner, the "ideal" self, dwelling in what is known to be a representation (perhaps through the feeling of being "led" described by Stein), also experiences "real" physiological responses and action-inclinations, which, however, are not acted upon. One lives imaginatively in the object, not by the deliberate exercise of imagination, but rather riding upon the energy of the nonvoluntary responses initiated by the aesthetic object. An inherent orientedness towards the other explains the origin of these responses, and also directs the international focus of these sensations continually back upon the object. "What I empathize...is life and activity, or a mode of my self- activity" (EAP, 404).

This playful alternation between self and other, physical and mental, passive and active, ideal and real, constituted and "led" is, as Lipps maintains, little more than the "yearing to live", a yearing which, can never be realized within the boundaries of a Cartesian self. In empathy, objects and others are rescued from the "objective" status impact by a modern Cartesian way of thinking. For that reason aesthetic empathy, and Lipps' detailed study of it, is a phenomenon which deserves to be reconsidered and studied anew.

Notes and References

1. Lipps citations in this article are derived from two Lipps articles : "Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure", *Die Zukunft* 54 (1905). translated by Karl Aschenbrenner and reprinted in *Aesthetic Theories*, ed. by Karl Aschenbrenner, Arnold Isenberg (Prentice-Hall, 1965); 403-412 [hereafter, EAP]; "Empathy, Inner Imitation, and Sense-Feelings." *Archiv fur die gesamte Psychologie* 1 (1903), reprinted in *A Modern Book of Esthetics*. ed. Melvin Rader (Hold, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), 374-382 [hereafter, EIIS].
2. Katherine Everett Gilbert, Helmut Kuhn. *A History of Esthetics* (Macmillan, 1939), 540.
3. Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*. translated by Waltraut Stein. Volume III: The Collected Works of Edith Stein (ICS Publications, 1989). 16.
4. Ibid., 17
5. See Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, translated by Peter Heath (Archon Books, 1973), 10. In a sense, Scheler criticizes Lipps from both directions. He claims to discover in Lipps an analogical theory for the knowledge of others, yet also attacks Lipps for confusing the "real" self with the perceived other. The latter occurs, though, because, on the alleged analogical process, the perceiver's own experience is dredged up by empathic imitation, at which point it becomes

difficult to distinguish the "real" self from the other. Scheler is quite concerned about any loss of self in empathic experience, fearing that it leads to kind "emotional infection" or mob behavior. That Scheler himself continues to struggle with the influences of Cartesianism is illustrated by the followings : "That is why we can also have it given to us that the other has an individual self distinct from our own, and that we can never fully comprehend this individual self, steeped as it is in own psychic experience, but only our own view of it as an individual, conditioned as this is by our own individual nature. It is a corollary of this that the other person has—like ourselves—a sphere of absolute personal privacy, which can never be given to us. But that 'experiences' occur there is given for us in expressive phenomena—again, not by inference, but directly, as a sort of primary 'perception'" (10)

6. Scheler appears to derive from his critique of Lipps a surprisingly Cartesian conclusion : "That is why we can also have it given to us that the other has an individual self distinct from our own, and that we can never fully comprehend this individual self, steeped as it is in its own psychic experience, but only our own view of it as an individual, conditioned as this is by our own individual nature. It is a corollary of this that the other person has—like ourselves—a sphere of absolute personal privacy, which can never be given to us (10).
7. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Harper & Row, 1962), 162. "Empathy' does not first constitute Being-with; only on the basis of Being-with does 'empathy' become possible: it gets its motivation from the unsociability of the dominant modes of Being-with" (ibid., 162).
8. "Whenever I see a 'laughing face', whenever I see just these spatial changes in a face, I experience a stimulus to grasp them. But remarkably, this stimulus is a stimulus that produces exactly the same kind of inner activity in me. By 'remarkably' I mean that there is no further explanation for this. Even if I call it instinctive, nothing is explained thereby. And yet this use of words is quite proper.... What is important for our existence, nature, wise as she is, has taken into her own hands and made into a matter of instinct removed from our own control. It is precisely because of this instinct that I cannot grasp the laughing face without the evocation of the same kind of inner activity." (409) One still wonders about the questions raised by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*, how do I recognize a face as such in the first place ? cf. Lipps' discuussion of the "act" (Akt, vs "activity", Aktivitat) of interpreting a sentence as an "expression" of meaning, 405-6.
9. Cf. Heidegger, "Of course it is indisputable that a lively mutual acquaintanceship on the basis of Being-with, often depends upon how far one's own Dasein has understood itself at the time; but this means that it depends only how far noe's essential Being with Others has made itself transparent and has not disguised itself" (ibid., 162)
10. "Aesthetic experience is a certain mode of feeling affected when I am paying aesthetic attention, when I give myself up wholly to what has been represented. It is an experiencing which does not affect me as a real individual, as a part of the context of reality, but only as the aesthetic spectator living and moving in a world of aesthetic representation, far removed from actuality" (EAP, 411).

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Intimate Conflict : Contradiction as Origin and Mode of Existence of the Work of Art

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> The three of them sat before the window looking at the sea. One talked about the sea. The second listened. The third neither spoke nor listened; he was deep in the sea; he floated.
>
> Yannis Ritsos, from "The Third one,"
>
> *Gestures* (London, 1971)

In his *Science of Logic* Hegel rejects the law of the excluded middle in favor of a viewpoint which acknowledges the essential nature of contradiction. Opposites which are posited are always posited with a third determination, and "the third . . . . when taken more profoundly, is the unity of reflection into which the opposition withdraws as into ground."[1] Yet this ground, this unity of reflection, must always determine itself in identity, difference and opposition; the ground posits its determinations in order to appear, and inversely the determinations demand the ground or the unity in order for them to be posited. Hegel pushes this formulation further. When the determinations of this ground,

> namely, identity, difference and opposition, have been put into the form of law, still more should the determination into which they pass as their truth, namely, contradiction, be grasped and enunciated as a law: *everything is inherently contradictory*, and in the sense that this law in contrast to the others expresses rather the truth and the essential nature of things. The contradiction which makes its appearance in opposition, is only the developed nothing that is contained in identity and that appears in the expression that the law of identity says nothing. This negation further determines itself into difference and opposition, which now is the posited contradiction.

Thus contradiction shows itself, for Hegel, as the enunciated and lawful truth of all determinations; it is "the essential nature of things." The nothing that is also the unity determines itself solely, truthfully and essentially in contradiction. Or to put it differently :

> Contradiction develops out of Polar Opposition when we reflect on the fact that each opposite must in a sense contain, and also not contain, its opposite: each opposite, says Hegel, is mediated with self through its other, and so contains that latter, but it is also mediated with self

> through the *non*-being of its other, and through the exclusion of the latter from itself. Such Contradiction was implicit in mere Difference for there too we had an apparent separateness which was also a form of union. It is (we see) in the attempt to give separateness and independence to opposed determinations that Contradiction arises : Contradiction is therefore the limit towards which all Difference and Opposition necessarily tends.[2]

Contradiction necessarily arises in any determination and in any action, for as the limit of all oppositions contradiction stands as the essential law of determination. Here, the polar opposites of the contradiction mediate themselves into their appearance through the simultaneous being and non-being of their opposites; and, furthermore, this entire determination still remains grounded in a unity (a "union"). Indeed, Hegel claims forcefully that "contradiction is the root of all movement," for "it is only in so far as something has a contradiction within it that it moves, has an urge and activity.

To shift the field of discussion from logic to aesthetics and apply this Hegelian notion of contradiction to works of art would entail seeing works of art as "inherently contradictory."[3] Contradiction would be present *at* or *as* the ground of aesthetic works and would be the mode of appearance and existence of a work of art. In other words, contradiction would be the "limit" towards which all works of art necessarily tend. This thesis, which is here asserted provisionally on the basis of Hegel's formulation, is one I would like to examine and elaborate in the course of this essay.

There could be several kinds of contradiction cited in works of art; so it is possible that most of them might fail to accord with that particular kind of contradiction deployed in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. For instance, if a work were reduced to a series of propositions and a logical contradiction found between two of these propositions- such as, "Q is F" and "Q is M" where it is known that "F is not M" : therefore the first two propositions stand in logical contradiction to one another- This state of philosophical affairs would not be Hegel's notion of contradiction. As a matter of fact, this logical contradiction is the kind of contradiction Hegel argues against in his discussion of the law of the excluded middle.[4] A second example of this multiplicity of contradiction will be a bit more elaborate: four readings of the play of contradiction in the "Boy of Winander" section of "Book Fifth" of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*.[5] Two of the readings are based on two fairly recent approaches to contradiction and aesthetic conflict; a third reading is based on a popular critical approach to Wordsworth; and the fourth reading is an attempt to see an Hegelian notion of contradiction at work. The idea motivating these four readings is to test practically the thesis of

contradiction as the mode of existence of a work of art as well as to see different kinds of contradiction, however, is to realize the Hegelian notion of contradiction as applied to aesthetic works as the most cogent and embracing.

To consider the "Boy of Winander" episode in *The Prelude* as a "self-consuming artifact" would leave the reader with an epistemological insight at the conclusion of the passage.[6] A single sentence composes the passage, and this sentence occurs between the opening phrase "There was a Boy:" and the opening phrase "This Boy was . . . ." in the next verse paragraph of the fifth book. The body of this sentence is posited as an abrupt consequence or some type of opening up of the statement "There was a Boy:" and this quick bursting open, as it were, is suggested by the colon in the first line, the dash in the second line ("There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs / And islands of Winander: - many a time . . .") as well as the return to the phrase "This Boy was . . ." recalls "There was a Boy:" and suggests that the experience which the reader has just undergone happened in the briefest of moments, as if the narrator had paused to sigh between words and had been caught momentarily in a rush of recollections. The reader feels that he has been swept quickly through these recollections also and that he is left hanging silently over the lake's edge before the narrator resumes his discourse with "This Boy was . . ." In this moment, then, in this single sentence, the reader is carried forward by the dialectical thrust of the narrator's recollections. Transitions are made quickly by the wealth of "and"s, "then"s and "when"s; but the force of these connectors is to pull the reader along behind them as soon as they are pronounced. The one sentence and its relationship (by means of a colon and dash) to the overall narration demand this dialectical forward thrust. There is one "visible scene" (1.384) constant throughout the one sentence, but the dialectic brings a consecutive series of events before the reader as he reads. One event not only replaces the previous event in the foreground of the reader's attention but also seems to leave that prior event behind it as a stepping-stone, as if cast aside or abandoned in passing. The sentence and the reader's experience of its pass through a"jocund din" (1.379) beginning with the Boy's preparations (11. 368-72), his "mimic hootings" (1. 373), the owls' "responsive" shouts (11. 374-76), and then the redoubling echoes of the "concourse wild" (1. 378). The movement is forward from the Boy standing alone before the lake to an increasing and redoubling response between the Boy and the owls and their mutual echoes. All becomes wildly lost and blended in the "jocund din"; and then this event, this level of the dialectic, breaks into the next where the Boy hangs "listening" expectantly (1.381). He is drawn towards the other side of the lake, and with "a gentle shock of mild surprise" "the voice / of mountain torrents" is "carried far into

his heart" (11. 382-84). In the silence that occurs after the closeness of the "concourse wild," a deeper and farther "voice" pierces through to the "heart" of the Boy. Yet the dialectic carries the Boy and the reader a further step and allows the whole "visible scene" to "enter unawares" into the Boy's and the reader's minds (11. 384-85). After that far-off voice enters deep, all that was once separate enters without being known into a moment of "hanging" silence both for the Boy and for the reader. Both the Boy and the reader have been carried forward into an epistemological insight by the thrust of their experiences, and the level they reach is an utterly suspended moment. The level of insight consumes the previous levels or events leading up to it; all is now blended unawares into one silent mind. The whole sentence and the whole self-consuming movement towards insight, however, are consumed themselves when the narrator breaks the "hanging" silence with the words "This Boy was . . ." and thereby reminds the reader that what he has experienced is the momentary pause and recollection following a colon.

This "Fishean" reading of the Wordsworth passage thus points to contradiction in the work of art as being a contradiction in the aesthetic experience. The dialectical thrust of a piece of writing, according to Fish, consumes where it has been and where it is now in order to lift the reader to a higher level of insight. Yet this mode of contradiction deals with a particular type of reading experience, though that reading experience depends upon a "burning up" of the text that is supposedly implicit in the work itself. The point is, though, that with the Hegelian notion of contradiction an action comes into appearance in and through contradiction. Contradiction is an activity itself, for it is the "limit" of all differences and oppositions. Thus it would be the opposite of the state of mind that the Boy and perhaps the reader attain at the end of a "Fishean" reading of the "Boy of Winander" passage. What happens in this reading is "the loss of power."[7] Contradiction is not the source and appearance of activity here; but, instead, it shows itself as the end and self-consumption of activity: it is the loss of power and thereby the loss of contradiction.

A second reading of the Wordsworth passage can be made from the perspective on contradiction developed in Per Aage Brandt's essay "The White-Haired Generator." Brandt says that "contradiction stands out in a text as its short-circuited thought. It is the text's motivating underlying reason (sense) which is noticed as it fails."[8] A text purportedly doubles back upon itself and presents three levels to the reader; and in contradiction the third, or deep, level of the text fails to complete a full, rational circuit with the first, or aesthetic, level. The contradiction, though, occurs through the medium of the second level of the text. In the "Boy of Winander" passage, the "visible scene," with the Boy standing alone by the

side of the lake, constitutes the medium or the second level of the text. A great deal of activity occurs in the passage, but the actual medium of that activity is the constant and established position of everything in that "visible scene." Yet this medium is reflected in another way. Though the physical location of the passage is graphically determined as one scene, the way in which that passage is spiken to the reader is curiously deceptive. This deception resides in the fact that one sentence contains this plethora of activity, transitions and advancements. It is not at first noticeable that only one constant, physical scene and one sentence could serve together as the medium or, in all senses of the word, the passage for the Boy of Winander.

This medium of visible scene and single sentence brings the other two levels of the text into contact with one another. The first level of the text can be seen as the level of sounds and activity. As with the second level or medium, this first level has two aspects - namely, the sounds of the "concourse wild" and the sounding of the clauses of the sentence one after another. Held by the medium of the "visible scene," the sounds made by the Boy, the owls and the echoes build up to an intensity which then crest over into that hanging silence. Similarly, the sounding of the clauses of the sentence occur in a sequence that yields to the hanging moment at the end of the passage. But this stress on the sounding of the one sentence itself as well as the "concourse wild / Of jocund din" is not meant to be incidental or capricious, for in the third level of the text this dual stress becomes justified. Here the second level, the "visible scene" and the sentence itself, generates that one moment of silence that liberates itself from the sounds of the first level.[9] This liberation occurs simultaneously in both the Boy and the sentence as they "h(a)ng / Listening" in the silence after the sounds. In that coming to stasis and silence, the second level of the text mediates the transformation from independent movement and sounds to the liberation, the piercing in deep of a far-off voice which completes the merging of Boy and visible scene (Other). Silence and stasis (the hanging over the lake edge, listening) are liberated from sound and activity through the aegis of their generator, the visible scene and the sentence. Yet the generator holds its contraries within it, and the movement toward liberation can be repeated. The visible scene and the sentence are both sound and silence, activity and stasis, at once; but this truth must be experienced temporally again and again in order to see what is possible.[10]

This second reading points to another kind of contradiction, but it is not really very different from that first kind of contradiction discovered in the reading according to Stanley Fish's method. A contradiction is generated by the text as the text unfolds itself temporally, but that contradiction emerges as a burning up of the text towards a possibility. The possible conflicts with the actual in the

"mediating machine" of the poem.[11] This conflict involves the negation of one type of activity while an assertion of a contradictory (contradictory to the original activity) possibility shows itself in its movement towards silence and death. As with Fish, there is a "loss of power" even though a possibility has been liberated momentarily. The text ends, death comes, and the pause between statements is shattered by the sounding of "This Boy was . . ." Again contradiction is not the source and appearance of activity as in Hegel, but instead it is the slow "death struggle"[12] of activity.

A third reading of the "Boy of Winander" passage can be made employing the method used in David Ferry's *The Limits of Mortality*. Ferry intends to read the major poems of Wordsworth "under the form of eternity." He borrows from Spinoza for both his vocabulary and his interpretive categories; and to conceive of things "under the form of eternity" is to see them "so far as we conceive them to be contained in God, and to follow from the necessity of the divine nature."[13] To conceive of things in such a way, though, is to view them under the aspect of abstraction, of eternal laws and eternal, non-concertized truth. Again borrowing from Spinoza, Ferry contrasts the level of interpretation "under the form of eternity" with a second level of interpretation, the level at which we conceive of things "in so far as we conceive them to exist with relation to a fixed time and place."[14] We are engaged in the particular itself and thereby miss seeing clearly the particular in its universal and eternal aspect. According to the categories that he has derived from Spinoza, Ferry insists, then, that there are two possible readings of Wordsworth's poems. One reading follows the conception of things with regard to fixed time and place, and the other claims to read the meanings of the poems with regard to their universal, eternal or divine form. The first type of conception Ferry calls the "sacramental imagination." The sacramental imagination is bound to the concrete instance and all its difficulties and inadequacies (inadequate in the sense of not clearly showing forth the eternal aspect). Yet this type of imagination would persevere in its search for the flash of the eternal in the concrete itself. The second type of conception is called the "mystical imagination," for it apprehends the eternal when the concrete is suppressed or obliterated entirely. The concrete merely supplies an occasion for the workings of the mystical imagination which in "introspection" or private manipulation and expressiveness frees the eternal essence or universal meaning from its immersion in external nature. The hypothesis that Ferry wants to put forward and test says that Wordsworth's imagination destroys nature and human relations in order to express the eternal aspect latent in them.

The application of Ferry's two types of reading to the Wordsworth passage result in the generation of a contradiction which is quite similar to the

one in the "Brandtean" reading. A reading "under the form of eternity" would put the eternal aspect sought by the mystical imagination into conflict with the "fixed time and place" in which the sacramental imagination dwells. The eternal aspect would be the possibility which is freed only by contradicting and destroying the given actuality of the concrete instance. The moment when

> the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind,
> With all its solemn imagery, it rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake, (11. 384-88)

This moment is the mystical imagination apprehending the eternal, the fundamental identity of self and other. But in that apprehension "the visible scene" is transported and incorporated into the mind. A violence has been committed in the sense that the conflict between the mystical and sacramental imaginations has gone in favor of one to the suppression and destruction of the other. All the hooting and echoes and the din created are being drawn towards their obliteration in the silent pause, the hanging posture and mystical union. But this is also what has happened in the second reading of the passage. A possibility shows itself in the contradictory and destroying conflict with the actual, but it shows itself only for that moment before its own death. Similarly, the Boy dies. The "knowledge" gained in his mystic vision was "purchased by the loss of power" (1. 425). For the third time, the citing of contradiction in the passage reveals that particular type of contradiction as a dying, self-consuming struggle between what is actual and what would like to uproot completely and supplant that actuality.

The fourth reading discovers contradiction just as the first three have done, but contradiction here lies not in the conflict of sounding and silent moments along a temporal axis in the text or in a reader's consumption of it. Contradiction under this reading would seem to be the foundation for the other three readings of contradiction, for it is the founding or originating contradiction of the work itself. The Boy stands alone amidst and almost dwarfed by the grand movements of the stars "along the edges of the hills" (1. 367). The stars and the Boy are at two extremes, at two horizons, of the coming conflict. By gathering his fingers together and then his interwoven hands to his mouth, the Boy gathers himself as if to summon the distant:

> with fingers interwoven, both hands
> Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
> Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,

Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him. (11. 370-74)

He must mimic the sounds of the distant in order for it to respond to his summons. The owls, once silent, now call back to him, "responsive to his call" (1. 376). The exchange of summonings and answerings and the redoubling echoes of these callings create that "concourse wild / Of jocund din" which brings both horizons together in pure sound. This communion of summoning and answering breaks over into "a lengthened pause / Of silence" in which the Boy is prepared to receive, though with "a gentle shock of mild surprise," the distant "voice / Of mountain torrents" (11. 379-84). The appearance of the Boy at the lake's edge and his initial hootings have established a demand and a conflict that is answered equally by the initially distant, and together they create a concourse that brings them into an intimate, give- and-take conflict. That intimate conflict and exchange then makes possible the speaking of an otherwise imperceptible or inaudible truth. But that conflict between opposing horizons is essential to the speaking of that truth; it is only in the conflict and the conflict and the concourse between opposites that something distant and hidden shows itself and enters deep. The establishment of this conflict, the positing of this contradiction within the one "visible scene," is the necessary foundation for the other three readings and their instances of contradiction. The element common to the three of them, though they each treat it differently, is the contradictory disparity between the final possibility of the passage and its actual beginnings. These instances of contradiction imply that the possible cannot show itself unless the actual is consumed in the process of showing. Yet there is the more fundamental and intimate contradiction between horizons in the text that nonetheless holds the struggle between the actual and the possible *as a potentially self-consuming conflict.* Similarly with the sentence itself, there is a conflict commenced with the very first words of the passage "There was a Boy:". Those words establish a conflict to be developed by positing one of the poles, one of the horizons, of that conflict. The sentence creates and holds its struggle until it too comes to rest after the showing of its truth in the conflict.

The "Boy of Winander" passage, however, concludes with "the visible scene" entering the Boy's mind, and for all practical purposes the actual conflict is destroyed in the momentary and "hanging" merger of the two horizons. The conflict is not preserved in its contradictory status but succumbs to a new possibility. This factor is precisely what makes possible the viability of the other three readings and the other three instances of contradiction. Yet it also means that a deception has been carried out. For each of those first three readings, an appeal has been made to a wider context, of which the "Boy of Winander"

passage itself is only a part, in order to see how those readings fail to match Hegel's notion of contradiction. The recognition of a fourth type of contradiction in the Wordsworth passage becomes precarious if the appeal to a wider context cannot be made, for the end of the passage seems to obliterate the maintenance of such a contradiction or struggle. The "Boy of Winander" passage is a moment in the wider context of "Book Fifth" of *The Prelude.* The narrator has been discoursing about "a wiser spirit at work for us" and pauses to speak about the Boy. The pause is broken when the narrator returns to his regular narration, but the "hanging" moment he has let happen comes under indirect questioning. The possibility suggested in the Boy's momentary straining towards and merging with the outer horizon is consumed when we learn that the Boy has died soon after these mystical moments have occurred. In his place, Wordsworth wishes "a race of real children" to be raised properly so that the knowledge they find may not be the knowledge that is only "purchased by the loss of power." In essence, the Boy was not mature enough to maintain the struggle and the contradiction of his state so that he might know in a non-self-consuming way that" wiser spirit." The voice which enters him enters "unawares into his mind"; it seizes him completely and destroys, in the contradictory fashion of the first three readings, that originating and fundamental contradiction which is "the essential nature of things," according to Hegel. The text of the "Boy of Winander" passage is bracketed with a context that bears upon the readings of contradiction in the passage. Analogously, the four readings of contradiction in that passage are here bracketed by Hegel's notion of contradiction and a theory of contradiction as the source and mode of existence of works of art that follows below in section.IV.

II

There are, however, two fine examples of a later, and perhaps more mature, vision of this originating and fundamental contradiction in Wordsworth; one is located at the beginning of "Book Fourteenth" of *The Prelude* and the other near the end of "Book Fourth" of *The Excursion.*[15] In the passage from *The Prelude* the poet-narrator, a friend and a shepherd begin to climb a mountainside in Cambria during "a close, warm breezeless summer night." The climb is an intense struggle during those dark hours before morning, and the closeness of the atmosphere accentuates the fact. "The mist soon girt (them) round" as if burdening them with unwanted clothing, and they "pensively" sink into their own "thoughts" and "musings." "With forehead bent / Earthward, as if in opposition set against an enemy," the narrator continues to struggle with and against the dark mountainside until suddenly "the ground appeared to brighten" at his feet and "instantly a light upon the turf / Fell like a flash." The moon shows itself shorn of its clothing ("hung naked in a firmament / Of azure without cloud")

and reveals to the poet the profit of his struggle. The moon lights up the "headlands" and "the ethereal vault" as far "as the sight could reach," and the mist below becomes a "billowy ocean" upon whose "shore" the poet and his friends stand. And in this silent, "visible Scene," "a rift" opens not distant from that shore; and "roaring with one voice," the sound of "innumerable" waters is "heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour, / For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens." The fruit of the struggle is to hear that voice speaking through the rift opened by one's struggle with the earth; and that voice speaks only in that rifting, in that conflict and contradiction between opposite horizons. The vision does not consume itself, for that speaking rift is not usurped by the humans listening to it from their shore. They come to meet it through their struggle, and "that vision, given to spirits of the night / And three chance human wanderers," is held by them "in calm thought" after the moment of the vision dissolves. Only in contradiction, in intimate conflict, does vision appear to offer itself and the unswayable chance to be heard.

The passage from the fourth book of *The Excursion* (11. 1133-87) offers yet another "visible scene" in which contradiction works in its originating and fundamental way. There is another boy in this section, "a curious child, who dwelt upon a tract / Of inland ground." Much like the Boy of Winander, this child listens for that distant voice; he applies "to his ear / The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell; / To which, in silence hushed, his very soul / Listened intensely." With the lips of the shell pressed to his ear, the child hears "murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed / Mysterious union with its native sea." Yet, at this enchanting point, there is a sudden bridge made into a fuller vision. Even as the shell now speaks to the child when he would listen, then

> Even such a shell the universe itself
> Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
> I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
> Authentic tidings of invisible things. (11. 11412-44)

The passage goes on to present the moment when such tidings are brought to men: when "the ear of Faith" would listen "intensely" to the universe. Such a moment happens as "a shock of awful consciousness" (reminiscent and yet of greater intensity than the Boy of Winander's "gentle shock of mild surprise") when at twilight a mountain scape brings the sky down to rest upon its peaks and composes a "temple" of "dimensions vast." In this temple hootings are not mimicked and redoubled, but "human anthems" can be heard which none the less do not have to "break the stillness that prevails" there. Nature supports the human songs in kind:

Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams. (11. 1169-75)

The temple has brought the human and the natural into an intimate conflict with one another so that nature itself can now take up the "anthems" and sing them with its own sounds. In this moment the human and natural horizons meet in "song" within the "temple" that their intimacy brings into being. And because of this intimate conflict of the human and natural horizons, "authentic tidings of invisible things" are heard by the wanderer in the precincts of this temple:

and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! (11. 1175-81)

The temple, "this fabric huge," opens a space, through its intimate conflict of human and natural, for the "unseen" raven to be heard. The "one voice" of the raven enters this "visible scene" which is prepared to hear it, for it has been prepared precisely by way of the intimate conflict. The wanderer catches this voice and traces its echoes and thereby "accompanies (the raven's flight / Through the calm region." Yet the cry

fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire: yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered! (11. 1184-87)

The wanderer accompanies the raven's cry just as the curious child delights in the murmurings of the shell, but they do not seek a mystical union with the invisible and abyssal. The conflict is preserved as a conflict so that one may hear again and yet again the "authentic tidings of invisible things." The fundamental and originating contradiction is maintained and celebrated in preference to consuming oneself in the contradiction between what is seen as actual and what is proposed as possible. The possible, or rather the voice of "invisible things," is audible again and again because it occurs in the conflicts of the actual.

III

This split in the actual is, nevertheless, the design in which and through which the unswayable can be heard. This same problem happens in the self as well as the work of art, and Henry W. Johnstone's book *The Problem of the Self* sketches this ontological dimension of contradiction. In the activity of self-reference a person is implicitly saying that he knows himself, that he can become discontinuous and speak about himself as if he were an object. Yet at the same time that person maintains a continuity.

> If you say "I am tired," it is one identical person who *says* he is tired and *is* tired. This performance has no mechanical or logical model. If a machine ever said "I am tired," it provisional unity would break down into the duality of a reporting part and a tired part. But the unity of the person is powerful enough to fuse these parts into one, however inconsistent this fusion may be.[16]

The speaking person cannot reconcile this inconsistency or contradiction within himself. Instead the person must appeal to the self as the mean of explaining the inconsistency. "The self is alleged to be the *locus* of the inconsistency, and hence explains it without repudiating it" (PS, p. 19). Thus the person has a continual problematic at its foundation; it has a tension in its self that it cannot *and* should not escape:

> *Tension* presupposes a *single* self, which has both decided and not decided. The schizophrenic alteration of true self and false self, as for example in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, is in fact an evasion of tension. We see a person undergoing tension only when we see him as having both poles of a contradiction; that is, as having brought them within a single perspective. This perspective is the person's self. It is the self that establishes the contradiction by bringing its poles together within a single perspective. Thus contradiction and self presuppose one another (*PS*, pp. 19-20)

Tension, then, involves the acceptance of a contradiction in the self and the acknowledgement of its necessity for the well-being of the person. "The actual person . . . is haunted by the genuine and inescapable possibility of falling into contradiction. He is haunted by the possibility of a self" (*PS*, p. 26). The inescapable and fundamental nature of contradiction threatens the person with uncertainty and insecurity concerning his origins. He cannot rest comfortably in the assertion that he is an irreducible and unified ego. When the ego would be confronted with a contradiction at its source, for instance in the problematic of self-reference, then it must assert itself as irreducible or be consumed in the contradiction.[17] But when the contradiction is accepted and acknowledged as the

problem of the self and the foundation of the person, then a new perspective on the actual person and his possibility of a self is gained. Thus *the possible* which presents contradiction to the person does not consume that *actual* person, for "the appearance of a genuine self" necessarily presupposes "the unity of the person" *PS,* p.29). If the person was not a unity, however inconsistent, then the self would not be called upon in the first place to present its fundamental contradiction; instead, the person would function as if he were the machine that tried to monitor itself--in essence, two machines. This perspective on the actual person and the possible self shows that the contradiction "is unified through the evocation of [the] self," and that the "self, in unifying the contradiction, both confirms [this] unity as a person and stamps [it] with this unity" (*PS*, p. 29). This account of contradiction, Johnston concludes, is a "more fundamental account" of contradiction than skepticism or dissimulation because only here is the genuine self evoked—that is, seen emerging from the split in the actual person in order to accept the burden and responsibility of maintaining he contradiction and thereby maintaining the genuine unity of the person (*PS*, p.150).

This sketch of the ontological dimension of contradiction in *The Problem of the Self* provides key relationships in the elaboration of contradiction as fundamental and originating for works of art. Analogous to the person in Johnstone's study, the passages (or the work of art, generally) from Wordsworth would present an actual unity which is thrown into a tension with itself. The person presents himself with the two poles that arise in self-reference, and each Wordsworth passage establishes a conflict between two horizons—one human and one natural. These two types of tension are the originating and fundamental contradictions in their respective contexts. The tension, on the one hand, and the conflict of horizons, on the other, both seek a unity in which their fundamental contradictions will be preserved in all their originating power. If these contradictions are not accepted and acknowledged as necessary contradictions, then the person might fall into a state of despair or schizophrenia and the art work could consume itself in one of the three ways, for instance, that the first three approaches to the "Boy of Winander" passage consumed themselves in their contradictions. These fundamental contradictions, however, are maintained in the self for Johnstone and in the visible scene, the night climb and the temple for Wordsworth. Just as the self holds the two poles of contradiction together through a tension within itself, so also do the sites of conflict between horizons in the three Wordsworth passages considered above maintain their contradictions in intimate struggles. And finally, through the maintaining of these contradictions different yet corresponding tidings are brought. To the person who evokes his genuine self in order to accept the inherent and inescapable contradiction, the message of his burden and

responsibility are brought; and to the wanderers to struggle with the earth in intimate conflict until a rift opens, the "authentic tidings of invisible things" are given. Thus there are a series of correspondences possible between contradiction cited in the Wordsworth passages and the ontological dimension of contradiction in the theory of the self. These correspondences can constitute a pathway into the ontological dimension of contradiction in the theory of the work of art.

IV

The initial formulation of contradiction as originating and fundamental in works of art, for this essay, was derived from Hegel's discussion of contradiction in logic. This formulation was then tested for its comparative viability in the "Boy of Winander" passage. Two further passages from Wordsworth, as well as a sketch of Johnstone's project on the self, have spelled out practically the crucial nature of contradiction in the workings of Wordsworth's poetry, or at least in the workings of those two passages. A theory of the work of art which could place all these elements and observations on contradiction into a systematic form, one in which contradiction would be present at or as the ground of works of art and would be the mode of appearance and existence of a work of art, is, I believe, the theory offered by Martin Heidegger in his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Truth can be said to happen, according to Heidegger, in and through contradiction. Truth, when taken in the original Greek sense of the word "aletheia," "means the unconcealment of that which is."[18] This unoconcealment is possible in the work because the work opens up a place in which truth shows itself. Or in other words, "the work as work sets up a world. The work holds open the Open of the world" ("OWA," p. 672). Heidegger also calls the Open or the open place "a clearing" or "a lighting". Truth is lit up or illuminated when it is unconcealed in the Open, the clearing of what is. An emblem of this process, for Heidegger, is the temple. The Greek temple in its worked form allows the god to be unconcealed, to be illuminated, in the holy space that the temple clears and stands in ("OWA," pp. 669-70). Similarly with the two Wordsworth passages considered as mature visions of the originating and fundamental contradiction, there is a holy space opened in the work in which "invisible things" are brought into the Open and their voices heard. Yet these "invisible things" remain invisible in their very speaking. The work or the temple and their truth cannot yield total unconcealment. The unconcealment of what is also entails its contradiction, the concealment of what is. The "visible scene" must not enter wholly into the wanderer and destroy the intimate conflict of horizons. There must always be that countermovement of concealment in order to preserve the contradiction and in order to guarantee the possibility of sighting or hearing the truth unconcealed

"again, / And yet again." In Heidegger, this countermovement of concealment and unconcealment is called an "essential strife" in which the "opponents," though opposed in an inescapable and contradictory struggle, do not consume themselves but instead "raise each other into the self-assertion of their essence" ("OWA," p.675). The one opponent or horizon is the "world," the open place of unconcealment, while the other is the "earth," the concealed and the perpetually concealing. Thus the attempt to light up truth finds its source and its mode of existence in the perpetual and essential struggle between two opposites, world and earth. World must not usurp earth, nor earth world; but the contradiction must be maintained for truth to happen. And this maintenance is not a violence done to either opponent, for in conflict and only in conflict can they "raise each other in the self-assertion" of what they are :

> Self-assertion of essence, however, is never the fixing of self in some contingent circumstance, but the surrender of self to the secret originality of the source of one's own being. In strife, each opponent carries the other beyond itself. Thus the strife becomes ever more intense as strife, and more authentically what it is. The more the struggle exceeds itself on its own account, the more inflexibly do the opponents release themselves into the intimacy of simply belonging to one another. The earth cannot dispense with the Open of the world if it itself is to appear as earth in the liberated impulse of its self-enclosure. The world, again, cannot float off from the earth if it is to ground itself on a firm foundation as the governing breadth and path of all essential destiny. ("OWA," p.675)

This strife and continual contradiction between the openness of world and the concealing power of earth is fundamental and originating for the happening of truth. This strife is instigated in the work of art. It is there that truth shows itself in the "simple intimacy" of contradiction and that "the unity of the work" can rest upon itself—an acceptance and acknowledgement of its necessary struggle—as a temple or a night struggle and vision ("OWA," pp. 674-75).

Truth, then, happens in the struggle between earth and world, and the locus or the composing of that struggle is the work itself.

> Truth establishes itself in the work. Truth is present only as the conflict between lighting and concealing in the opposition of world and earth. The aim of truth is to be established in the work as this conflict of world and earth. The conflict should not be resolved in an entity produced for the purpose, nor should it be merely housed there, but it should be disclosed by way of this entity. This entity must therefore contain within itself the essential traits of conflict. In the conflict the unity of world and earth is won. ("OWA," p. 686)

The work must both disclose and preserve the conflict of world and earth by originating and existing in that opposition. So the work is composed by contradiction as well as composing contradiction in the entity. Thus, the unity of the work, and the truth that thereby appears, depends on the status of contradiction in the work.

Contradiction in the work of art stands as originating and fundamental contradiction, according to Heidegger, when the status of contradiction is realized as "rift-design."[19] There is a rift between earth and world, but it is not an isolating kind of rift.

> This rift draws (*resist*) the opponents together into the source of their unity out of the single ground. It is a ground-plan (*Grundriss*). It is an elevation (*Auf-riss*) that draws the basic features of the rising up of the lighting of what is. This rift does not let the opponents break apart; it brings the opposition of measure and limit into the single boundary (*Umriss*). ("OWA," p. 686)

Thus, at the same time that contradiction cleaves earth and world into an opposition, it also provides the very design for their drawing into a unity that is held by a single boundary. But that unity that the opponents are drawn into is not the unity of world fully concealed in earth.[20] Instead, it is the unity of an intimate struggle between "opponents that belong to each other" and who in their struggle rise up from the ground into their single boundary. The struggle that draws into a unity, then, moves upward (elevation, *Aufriss*) from breach through ground-plan to boundary. The riftesign brings into the work and maintains the struggle and its rising movement; for "the rift-design is the drawing together into a unity of elevation and ground-plan, breach and boundary." Truth establishes and discloses itself in the Open that is unconcealed by the conflict brought into the work as the rift-design. Therefore "truth establishes itself in something that *is* in such a way, indeed, that the latter entity itself occupies the Open of truth" ("OWA," p. 686). Yet this occupying of the Open of truth by the rift-design depends upon the rift-design's trusting itself to the earth which can conceal it again ("OWA," pp. 686-87). In other words, the rift-design must entrust itself to contradiction; it must not seek to tear itself from its ground but must preserve the conflict.

Hegel's notion of contradiction, in this general way, can be seen as borne out in this Heideggerian theory of the work of art. Contradiction arises in the conflict between earth and world in which both opponents meditate one another into appearance as a contradiction. The pattern of this struggling, contradictory movement in the work is the rift-design, and this pattern has made it possible for the contradictory movement to be brought into the work. The rift-design

draws and holds contradiction in a unity so that not only will contradiction be preserved in the work but also so that truth will reveal (or "unconceal") itself by means of that contradiction. Yet this truth always has the possibility of contradicting itself by being concealed once more in the continual conflict. Contradiction is therefore both source and mode of existence of a work of art. It is both that initial breach and that limit or boundary of a work of art. There is activity or movement in the work only because there is originating and fundamental contradiction which has been brought into the work as unifying rift-design. The wanderer can enter the temple composed by the intimate conflict between the horizons of man and nature and hear at the boundary of that rift-design the one voice that reveals and yet conceals its "authentic tidings." He can do this only because that temple originates in and maintains the existence of contradiction. Yet in contradiction, and it would seem only in contradiction, is the "one voice" at the boundary "caught again, / And yet again recovered!"[21]

Notes and References

1 G.W.F. Hegel, Hegel's *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London : George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 439. Additional quotations from this one-volume translation of Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*, which are used in my first paragraph, are taken from this same translation and page.

2 J.N. Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel : An Introduction and Re- Examination* (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1966), p. 195.

3. In drawing upon *Hegel's Science of Logic* for an approach to the mode of existence of works of art, I am deliberately ignoring Hegel's own rather copious work in the field of aesthetics. Hegel's posthumously collected *Asthetik*-variously known in English under the titles *Aesthetics, Lectures on Aesthetics* and *The Philosophy of Fine Art*—offers an elaborate treatment of the notion of beauty and of the appearance of "the Ideal" in the sensuous material of art. Hegel also generates an extensive historical topology of the particular forms or genres of art, a typology which is rooted in the progress of concrete determination which "the Ideal" undergoes. The notion of contradiction is not really featured in Hegel's *Aesthetics*; the coincidence and harmony of opposites seem supreme :

> the nature of the artistic Ideal is to be sought in [the] reconveyance of external existence into the spiritual realm, so that the external appearance, by being adequate to the spirit, is the revelation thereof. ....[T]his... reconveyance ...remains in the centre where the purely external and the purely internal coincide. Accordingly, the Ideal is actuality, withdrawn from the profusion of details and accidents, in so far as the inner appears itself in this externality, lifted above and opposed to universality, as living individuality. (Hegel, *Aesthetics : Lectures on Fine Art*, Vol. I, trans. T. M. Knox [Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1975], p.156.)

The idea of divine incarnation, of the miraculous appearance of divine universality in the historical materiality of living human individual, clearly shapes this desire for a coincidence and harmony of opposites. A Kierkegardian sense of "paradox" (*Philosophical Fragments*) and "dialectical contradiction" (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*) will soon problematize the religious source of this idea or Ideal. Hegel himself in analyzing the determinacy or actualization of "the Ideal" in human activity, though, dwells at length on the social and psychological "collision" or "conflict" which obtains in the determinate situations which art enacts or dramatizes; contradictory views and intense and intimate intrapsychic struggles are keen here (*Aesthetics*, Vol. I, pp. 204-217).

4 Hegel's *Science of Logic*, pp. 438-9. Hegel objects that "the law of the excluded middle ...implies that there is nothing that is *neither A nor not-A* that there is not a third that is indifferent to the opposition" (p.438).

5 All quotations from this passage will be taken from the 1850 edition of *The Prelude* in William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, eds. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt (London : Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 525-6. The line references are to this text and edition.
Perhaps it should be noted that the readings of the "Boy of Winander" passage given in this essay depart from the more conventional emphasis placed upon themes of death and mortality and the poet-narrator's response to the Boy. However, if the passage is examined in the context of the thoughts and positions articulated in the fifth book of *The Prelude*, the struggle of the poet- narrator to limn a delicate balance among pedagogical and developmental excesses gains the foreground of attention. The poet—narrator has rejoiced that he "was reared/ Safe from an evil which these days have laid/Upon the children of the land, a pest/That might have dried me up, body and soul" (11. 226-9). That "evil" is a closely watched and strictly managed "modern system" of childrearing and pedagogy (1. 295). The poet recounts his own "open ground/ Of Fancy" and praises his mother's unselfish and unanxious "benignity and hope" in providing the needed "centre," "the heart/ And hinge of all our learnings and our loves" (11. 236-7, 292, 252, 257-8). He includes himself as one of a number of siblings ("Trooping together", 1. 260) and images the relation of mother to children as "the parent hen amid her brood" (1.246). In sharp contrast to this model of up-bringing, the poet-narrator satirizes the "model of a child" who is quite solitary and "early trained to worship seemliness" and who "can read lectures upon innocence" (11. 298-9, 314). Such a tamed and managed child will not do because, except for its vanity, "little would be left/Which he could truly love" and he would forsake "the playthings" which "old grandam earth" in "her love designed for him" (11. 329-31, 337-8). Perhaps worst of all, he would never be able to *forget himself* in the love of others, even in the love of other things as fanciful as faery tales (11. 341-6). The Boy of Winander, in sharp juxtaposition, is one who does forget himself in innocent delight in the playthings of the earth. This child, though, as solitary in his own way as the "model" child, marks out another pedagogical extreme, an extreme of imaginative power which Wordsworth himself on a number of occasions reveals strong attraction towards. The Boy strives too far and seems overtaken, indeed quite overwhelmed, by what his calls have initiated; the "voice" of "torrents" overpowers his "heart," the "visible scene" his "mind," and an "uncertain heaven" descends as well to "the bosom of the steady lake" which appears to swallow the Boy's heart and mind as they unwittingly give themselves over to powers beyond their control. Such overpowering leveling of horizons is fatal to imaginative growth; and, though this Boy commands the onlooker's mute and rapt attention and awe, he seems nonetheless forgotten by the village church who overlooks and listens to "the gladsome sounds" of the children playing below, "a race of young ones like to those/ With whom I herded" (11. 407-8). Such children are "A race of real children" who, unlike both the extremes of the "model" child and the Boy of Winander, gain "Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power!" (1. 425). For two different readings, see G. H. Hartman, "The Boy of Winander", *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 19-22, and John Beer, *Wordsworth in Time* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), pp. 85-6.

6 This reading is based upon the technique and theory developed in Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Aartifacts : The Experience of Seventeenth Century Literature* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1972), especially pp. 1-4. In this paragraph and the next, I will be using such terms and concepts, borrowed from this text of Fish, as "self-consuming", "dialectical thrust" and "epistemological insight".

7 Wordsworth, p. 526. This phrase is from the end of the passage which begins "this Boy was..." What the poet-narrator does is to describe wishfully "A race of real children" after standing over the grave of the Boy. These "real children, "unlike the Boy, would seek "Knowledge not purchased

by the loss of power"; and that "loss of power" characterizes precisely the kind of knowledge which the Boy achieves in his "hanging" silence. See also note 5 above.

8 Per Aage Brandt, "The White-Haired Generator," trans. Linda Tagliaferro, *Poetics*, VI (1972), 72.

9 The terminology here alludes to Brandt, p.75. Brandt's terms for his three levels of the text are "aesthetic" (first level). "oneiric" (second level) and "political" (third level); the oneiric level "mediates" the conflict between the actual or aesthetic text and the "liberation" which is possible at the political level of the text. See Brandt, pp. 74-5.

10 Again, some of the terminology here alludes to Brandt, p. 82.

11 Brandt, p. 82.

12 Ibid.

13 David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality* (Middletown, Corn. : Wesleyaan University Press, 1959), p. 8. Ferry quotes from Spinoza at this point.

14 Ibid.

15 All quotations from the passage in *The Prelude* will be taken from the 1850 edition of the poem in Wordsworth, pp. 583-4. All quotations from the passage in *the Excursion* will be taken from the same text, p. 639.

16 Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., *The Problem of the Self* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), pp. 12-3. Additional quotations from this book will be designated with the abbreviation *PS* and the relevant page numbers.

17 For some philosophical examples, see Johnstone's account of Descartes, Kant and Husserl (*PS*, p. 25 and Ch. 2, "Persons and Selves," pp. 15-29, in passing.)

18 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art,"*Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, eds. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (N.Y. : Modern Library, 1964), p. 676. Additional quotations from this essay will be designated with the abbreviation "OWA" and the relevant page numbers. This essay, a translation of "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," also appears, with slight modification, as the second chapter in Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A Hofstadter (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 17-87.

In his essay "Heidegger and the Work of Art" in *Aesthetics Today*, ed. Morris Philipson (N. Y.: New American Library, 1961), pp. 413-31, Hans Jaeger outlines and evaluates Heidegger's essay "The Origin of the Work of Art". He aptly articulates at some length Heidegger's concept of truth with regard to the work of art, and I refer the reader to his elucidation rather than to try to summarize it here. See especially pp. 421-3.

19 "Rift-design" is the translator's approximation of Heidegger's term "der Riss". The German word means both "rift", in the sense of a break or a splitting or opening, and "design," in the sense of a plan for drawing together and holding in one unity two or more elements. The term as well as a footnote on the term by the translator are found in Heidegger, p.686.

20 This point is not really made explicit in the body of this essay because it is more or less a hypothetical situation. One can say that the original (in the sense of primal) unity of "the single ground" is a hypothesis not necessarily demanded by this approach. We live in contradiction or the possibility of contradiction and, therefore, can only attempt to imagine a unity or ground before contradiction. This situation is a rather Kantian one, especially in the context of Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic, and not at all a Fichtean one, one in which a single ground of primal unity is posited (see Fichte's *Wissenchaftslehre*). Or in Heidegger's terms, we are in the opposition between earth and world when we try to think of the ground where world would be concealed completely in earth. Similarly, when we try to talk or think about an original silence which concealed all language or a "person" acting out a life in which self-reference is never thought or spoken, then perhaps we see we are constructing a hypothetical origin. This activity—essentially, the search for the origin—is not in and of itself erroneous; but the point is that as humans we live in contradiction. As Johnstone points out, we must accept the burden and responsibility of

this situation; we should not seek to escape it in the dreams of—or nostalgia for—primal unity or non-contradictory reunion to come.

21 An important implication of this way of looking at a work of art is that it reverses the possible reductionistic and nihilistic reverberations of taking repetition *as compulsion.* Instead, repetition may be seen or experienced as a frequently contingent feature of the temporal unfolding of a work of art; it may be a way of insistently calling attention to the operation of contradiction.

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A Taoist Reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear*

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The compositional date of the ancient Chinese book of wisdom called the *Tao Te Ching* has been fixed at anywhere from 600 to 300 B.C. Like ancient texts, it may be a compilation of works by many authors or the work of a single man, in this case a man is sometimes called Lao Tzu (the old master). Variously translated as *The Way, The Book of the Way and its Virtue, The Canon of Reason and Virtue*, Ellen M. Chen calls it "*The Canon of Tao and Te*" (4).

Tao signifies "the Way or Path.... the everlasting rhythm of life, the unity of the polarity of non-being and being" (Chen 52). *Te* is nature, "the manifestation of Tao in the world, as well as the condition when humans are at one with nature (Chen 45). Elsewhere, Chen describes the progression from "Tao (the creative ground), to Te (the created world)" (148) in a manner that makes it clear that Tao is the matrix out of which *Te* flows. She also points out that most of the eighty-one short chapters of the Tao *Te* points out that most of the eighty-one short chapters of the *Tao Te Ching* concern "how to be a sage ruler"(22).

This last fact provoked a series of desultory musings on the part of the present writer regarding the very un-Tao-like behaviour of Shakespeare's tragic character, King Lear. Surprisingly enough, upon closer examination it seemed that the play itself was a compendium of characters and situations which superbly illustrated some of the most fundamental Taoist principles.

The plot hinges on ideas such as the overdoing of rulers, the use of the useless, and telling the truth without indulging in exaggeration or flattery. All of these ideas are treated at length in early Taoist literature and are, in fact, at the heart of its teaching.

The characters displaying conduct both pivotal to the play and essential to Taoist thought can, for the purposes of this discussion, best be viewed in pairs: Lear and Gloucester; Edgar and the Fool; and Kent and Cordelia.

Lear and Gloucester indulge in behavior the Tao consistently criticizes. They court disaster by acting when it is not necessary; they do not accept their lot in life; and Lear, at least, lacks modesty and exhibits a tendency to show off.

Edgar and the Fool, on the other hand (in their quests for physical and economic survival, respectively), employ tactics highly praised by the Tao. Edgar makes use of the useless by assuming a low position in the social hierarchy--that

of a mad beggar. Thus he renders himself useless to others, but insures his own survival. And the Fool demonstrates a similar capacity in his ability to make something out of nothing through his verbal dexterity.

Kent and Cordelia, in their refusal to flatter, lie, or act insincerely for personal gain, represent a straightforward, homespun bluntness and honesty unstintingly admired in the Taoist tradition.

Politically, the *Tao Te Ching* promotes a laissez-faire attitude. It cautions the ruler not to interfere in the lives of his people any more than is necessary:

Therefore the sage gets rid of over-doing,
Gets rid of extravagances,
Gets rid of excesses. (Chap. 29)

Lear, in his preoccupation to "shake all cares and business from our age" (I, i, 39) gives away his kingdom needlessly. He acts when he does not have to, not permitting things to take their natural course (his daughters would have naturally inherited his kingdom upon his death).

The Taoist sage ruler avoids "superfluous actions" (Chap. 24). Instead he practices *wu-wei* (non-action). Non-action does not necessarily mean doing nothing. It is, rather, an action or non- action that "allows events to unfold according to their inner rhythms... acting with, not against, the inner rhythm of things (Chen 41).

Lear's gratuitous abdication is an action that interrupts the natural flow of things and throws himself, his family, and finally his nation into chaos.

Gloucester, too, overdoes things when he hastily condemns his faithful son Edgar to death solely on the false testimony of his treacherous illegitimate son, Edmund. Gloucester issues this decree without any hard evidence. He would have done better not to have acted at that time; instead, he should have gathered more information before coming to such a deplorable decision.

Both Lear's extravagant gesture and Gloucester's preceipitant judgement would be eschewed by a Taoist sage as actions that "impose an order on things alien to their inner rhythm" (Chen 127). And Lear's ostentatious display of generosity is indicative of another personality trait censured by the Tao : showing-off. Chapter 30 of the *Tao Te Ching* admonishes the "good person" to "Be resolute yet do not show off."

The *Chaung Tzu* is named after the author who is believed to have composed its original seven chapters (the "inner chapters") sometime in the fourth century B.C. It was completed in the form we know today by Kuo Hsiang (died 312 A.D.) and is generally considered to be Taoism's second great book.

The *Chaung Tzu* asserts that the great man "makes no show of benevolence" (178) and that he "goes along with what has been allotted to him" (179). We

have already seen how Lear does make a great show of his benevolence and how he shirks his duty as a ruler, thus acting contrary to his allotted role in life, and it may be added here that Gloucester also runs counter to the *Chauang Tzu's* teaching when he attempts to kill himself after he has been blinded.

By not accepting their appointed destines, both Lear and Gloucester are guilty of another form of over-doing: instead of acting in accordance with the natural flow of things, they strive to circumvent their allotted fates.

Two exchanges in the play, one between Lear and Cordelia and one between Lear and the Fool, highlight Lear's blindness to another important Taoist idea : making something out of nothing. Lear betrays his Western pragmatism in the following :

Lear : ....what can you say to draw third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cordelia :.....Nothing, my lord.

Lear : Nothing ?

Cordelia : Nothing.

Lear : Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again. (I, i, 85-90)

And later, after the Fool recites what is to Kent and Lear a nonsense poem, Lear reacts similarly, pronouncing the verse to be nothing. The Fool responds asking : "Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle ?" (I, iv, 124-5). Lear flatly declares that "nothing can be made out of nothing" (I, iv, 126).

Lear cannot see that the "nothing" that is Cordelia's answer to his request for a eulogy indicates a positive "something" about her that he should respect. That something is the downright refusal to flatter or lie to him to get a part of his kingdom. Similarly, Lear doesn't understand the value of the Fool's ability to generate something (whether it be new meanings, verbal abuse or low comedy) out of the nothing that is nonsense verse or the casual, innocuous comments of others.

The Taoist tradition, however, exhorts us to make something out of nothing and points out how useful nothing can be :

Cut out doors and windows to make a house.
Through its non-being (wu),
There is (yu) the use (yung) of the house.
Therefore in the being (yu-chih) of a thing,
There lies the benefit (li).
In the non-being (wu-chih) of a thing
There lies its use (yun). (*Tao Te Ching* Chap. 11)

The empty space included in a door or a window is the nothing that makes it useful. The *Tao Te Ching* goes so far as to maintain that everything

that *is* ultimately came from nothing : "Ten thousand things under heaven are born of being (yu). / Being is born of non-being (we)" (Chap. 40).

Tao itslef, this unutterable essence that is the matrix out of which all nature springs, is nothing except in its interaction with the things of this world:

> Tao, when it is uttered by the mouth,
> Is so bland it has no flavour.
> When looked at, it is not enough to be heard,
> When used (yung), it is inexhaustible.
> (*Tao Te Ching*) Chap. 35)

Akin to the creativity the Fool exhibits in making verbal witticisms out of prosaic remarks (the linguistic equivalent of making something out of nothing) is Edgar's capacity to make the useless useful. He disguises himself as "poor Tom," a mad beggar and, consequently, a man of no prestige, power, or wealth. He is, therefore, a man useless to other men.

In this disguise, however, Edgar can both safeguard his own life and serve his blinded father. His new identity is, indeed, useful for himself. Edgar says "Edgar I nothing am" (II, iii, 21) as he assumes his disguise, thus placing him in fellowship with the Fool who also utilizes his position at the bottom of the social hierarchy to preserve himself (in his case, economically, if not physically).

The *Chuang Tzu* frequently emphasizes the use of the useless and tell many stories that are variations on this theme. In one of them, a critic of Chuang Tzu's philosophy likens it to a big, useless tree :

> I have a big tree of the kind men call *shu.* Its trunk is too gnarled and bumpy to apply a measuring line to, its branches too bent and twisty to match up to a compass or square. You could stand it by the road and no carpenter would look at it twice. Your words, too, are big and useless, and so everyone alike spurns them. (35)

Chuang Tzu answers :

> Now you have this big tree and you're distressed because it's useless. Why don't you plant it in Not-Even-Anything Village, or the field of Broad-and-Boundless, relax and do nothing by its side, or lie down for a free and easy sleep under it ? Axes will never shorten its life, nothing can ever harm it. If there's no use for it, how can it ever come to grief or pain ? (35)

In another variation a carpenter tells his apprentice that a certain tree is worthless:

> Make boats out of it and they'd rot in no time; make vessels and they'd break at once. Use it for doors and it would sweet sap like pine; use

it for posts and the worms would eat them up. It's not a timber tree—there's nothing it can be used for. That's how it got to be that old. (63-4)

Finally, Chuang Tzu, who often lets madmen and cripples speak for him, has a madman proclaim : "All men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless !" (67).

Edgar and the Fool know the use of the useless and Lear playfully acknowledges Edgar's wisdom. In Act III, scene iv, he bestows upon Edgar such appellations as "Noble philosopher," "learned Theban," and "good Athenian." Lear's sarcasm masks Shakespear's irony. Edgar is wiser than Lear (because he is not the madman Lear thinks he is)and his wisdom, in voluntarily assuming a social position inferior to his real one, is in sharp contrast to Lear's, calamitous fatuity in relinquishing his preeminent social rank.

The third pair of characters, Kent and Cordelia, illustrate behavior that is also central to the Tao. They rate themselves fairly, do not brag or boast, see things clearly and act in an honest, forthright manner.

Like Edgar, kent is in disguise. He does this not to preserve himself from harm, however, but in order to continue serving the King, who has banished him. Although disguised, when queried by Lear, Kent enumerates character traits that are indelibly his own and which form the very core of his being :

Lear : what doest thou profess ? What wouldst thou with us ?

Kent : I do profess to be no less that I seem, to serve him truly that will put me in trust, to love him that is honest, to converse with him that is wise; and says little; to fear judgment, to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish. (I, iv, 11-16)

(Incidentally, the Tao agress with Kent that a wise man says little. Chapter 56 of the *Tao Te Ching*, opens with : "One who knows does not speak / one who speaks does not know.")

Cordelia, too, continues to serve her father's cause from exile. When approached by Lear in the play's opening scene, Cordelia renders her attributes and emotions accurately, as did Kent. she tells her astonished father that she loves him "according to my bond, no more no less" (I, i, 93). Thus, she describes her feelings honestly and without the hyperbole indulged in by her sisters. By avoiding excess, extravagance, and overdoing, Cordelia personifies the Taoist qualities her father and sisters so pointedly lack :

Cordelia : Good my lord, you have begot me, bred me, loved me. I Return those duties back as are right and fit. Obey you, love you, and most honor you. Why have my sisters husbands if they say they love you all ? Haply, when I shall wed. That lord whose hand must take

my plight shall carry Half my love with him, half my care and duty. Sure I shall never marry like my sisters. [To love my father all.] I, i, 95-104)

Cordelia and Kent remain loyal to Lear, and their conduct reflects Chuang Tzu's opinion respecting filial and ministerial fidelity : "When a fiial son does not fawn on his parents, when a loyal minister does not flatter his lord, they are the finest of sons and ministers" (138)

King Lear was certainly not intended as a Taoist parable. Nevertheless, reading it as such reveals its preoccupation with the same notions that are at the heart of the Tao. This kind of reading highlights the play's ethical dimension and conveys the didactic messages surely implicit in its contents. These tidings have been advanced not only by the Tao but by hundreds of other religious and ethical texts throughout the ages : be humble and honest; do not impose yourself on others or on the natural order of things; be creative enough to make something out of nothing and to find a use for the useless (in other words, look beyond the "something" that is the material world towards the "nothing" that exists only on the spiritual, or moral plane, and find value in that which the worldly find valueless); do not flatter others nor boast about yourself.

The Tao sets itself over against the compromises constantly demanded of us by the external, civilized world. It exhorts us to heed our own inner promptings, although they sometimes seem to counsel us to act against our own self-interest. The Tao would advise us to do what we think is right, not what is expedient. It would concur with Edgar when, in the play's last speech, he cautions Kent and Albany not to resist the way things are and to remain true to themselves : "The weight of this said time we must obey,/speak what we feel, not what we ought to say" (V, iii, 324- 5).

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Deceit, Desire, and Destruction in *King Lear*

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> Drama requires intense human conflict; human conflict in Shakespeare takes the form of mimetic rivalry; mimetic rivalry is the product of human mediation; internal mediation does not normally occur until a society becomes undifferentiated.
>
> Rene Girard, *A Theatre of Envy*

Lear opens with a whimper. Two underlings are engaging in that most tedious of discussions who is more favoured by the one in power, in this case, the Duke of Albany or of Cornwall. One has the impression that, were it not for the entrance of Edmund the bastard son of Gloucester the discussion, as such discussions are wont to do—would go on interminably. But that, of course, is the point. For a discussion of this placid sort does not continue, nor can it continue. Such discussions presume much; most importantly, they assume political stability, and the social order upon which political order rests,1 and this will, in the manner of a very few moments, become a thing of the past. The first words, then, of *Lear* are the calm before the storm, the prelude to the exit of the Hobbesian leviathan, the war of all against all. Yet, we would argue, there are seeds within these innocuous seeming first lines which portend danger, and the incredible events which shall follow—no less the complete dismantling of, among other things, political order. Following the theory of literary critic Rene Girard, we shall attempt to trace the dismantling. In his view, violence lies at the core of humaan society; indeed, violence both creates the need for and is a constant threat to social order. Yet Girard's view of the state is grounded in the concept of mimesis;[2] for Girard, the violence that constantly threatens to undo the social order is the product of mimetic desire which is always and inherently unstable and transitory because it is directly obliquely at its object. Valued things are filtered through a mediator : thus, in his early work, Girard referred to mimetic desire as triangular always involving object, mediator and modeller. His point is that objects have no intrinsic value; rather, what we desire and seek to appropriate is the product of what those whom we imitate desire (and vice versa). This process, initially encouraged by the mediator, eventually becomes problematic at the point at which modeller and mediator become so alike that their desires are undifferentiated. At this point, they become doubles of each other and, in consequence, mimetic rivals. When such a state of affairs infects not just a few

isolated individuals, but a society in general, a social crisis of escalating violence ensues as the product of a lack of differentiation. And it is this loss that is the stuff of great tragedy which, Girard contends, is articulated brilliantly by Shakespeare.

Indeed, this loss is subtly introduced in the first few lines of *Lear* as a foreshadowing of serious difficulties to come. Gloucester says that he cannot differentiate between Cornwall and Albany any more, although Kent's first line indicates that this previously was not the case, in terms of whom the "King had more affected" (I.i.1) since "equalities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice/of either's moiety" (1.i. 5-7).

Although Girard has written extensively on Shakespeare, he has not looked at *Lear* in any detail. We propose to do so. We shall, however, concentrate primarily, though by no means exclusively, on the beginning and the ending of the play. We do so because they display in concentrated form many of the ingredients which comprise Girard's hypothesis regarding the nature of mimetic desire and the violence and disruption of order such desire can, within the context of Shakespearean tragedy, produce.

Consider first the dichotomy Shakespeare plays with concerning nature and convention. Edmund, who cannot be ignored later as he acts as catalyst for chaos, goes unnoticed for the first few lines, while Gloucester and Kent converse about political minutiae. though he is the *natural* son of Gloucester, he has no standing in terms of *conventional* political structure. Because of this tenuous standing, he can be, and is, completely ignored, a mere piece of undifferentiated background. For Edmund, unlike his 'legitimate' brother Edgar, there is no "order of law" (I.i.19) to establish his place. Inded, Edmund and Edgar are discussed here by their father almost exclusively in terms of their legitimacy or illegitimacy, and discussion of Edmund serves primarily to set a context for Gloucester to engage in ribald conversation with Kent. Thus we are introduced here to a dichotomy between nature, in terms of sexual conquest by Gloucester over Edmund's mother, and convention whereby the same activity, sexual intercourse, produces qualitatively different results. This difference between nature and convention is the genesis and heart of Edmund's soliloquy in I.ii in which he both asserts his loyalty to nature, "Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law/My services are bound....", and castigates convention as a "plaque" (I.ii.1-3). But the assertiveness Edmund begins to adopt in I.ii is not yet possible, for it is founded on a political instability which occurs in the face of a loss of differentiation which begins to unfold only toward the end of I.i during the love test. Thus, when Edmund is discussed at the beginning of I,i, it is only to be summarily dismissed upon the entrance of Lear whom it is impossible to ignore, entering as he does at the head of the royal entourage. "He hath been out nine years" Gloucester informs

Kent regarding Edmund, but before he can continue, he is interrupted : "and away/He shall again. The King is coming" (I.i.34- 5).

The images and the phrasing are integrally important here. Lear enters behind one carrying a crown, a signifier of royal rank. And he is introduced by Gloucester not as Lear, but as "the King." That is, Lear is introduced not as natural person, but in terms of a conventional position, the head of the political and social hierarchy. In fact, there is not yet any dichotomy between personhood and social rank. Lear is simply 'the King;' indeed, at this point the phrase "Lear is King" amounts to an analytic statement. That is why it is so troublesome – actually impossible–for Lear's plan, to be introduced shortly, to work. For when he divides his kingdom, he is in essence attempting to divide himself, and this is rife with the problems typical of split and/or multipersonalities.

On the basis of convention, then, we get at the very beginning a clear image of differentiation between those with status and power and those with none. As a result, we have the order typical of stable political states. Almost immediately upon his entrance, however, Lear will unwittingly begin the process which undermines this order and stability as he thrusts the play into action. "[W]e shall," he says, "express our darker purpose :" (I.i.38) the abdication and infamous love test are underway.

There are a number of difficulties facing one at this point in the text. Let us mention one : there is an air of unbelievability surrounding the entire love test which makes it difficult, at least from a certain perspective, to suspend one's disbelief. Even given that Lear is a man who has held absolute power for a considerable period of time and, thus, is used to the sycophantic responses of those surrounding him, he seems too easily taken in by the obvious manoeuvers of Goneril and Regan. On the other hand, it is an understatement to say he deals poorly with those such as Cordelia and Kent who fail to accept his plan. In general, then, Lear, presumably a man of political savvy (not to mention savagery), concocts an unworkable plan, is overly sanguine when it meets with approval, and is excessively hostile to having its problematic features pointed out. Lear's plan, therefore, seems not only to be unreasonable, it strikes us as utterly irrational.

One seems forced, then, to wonder what on earth Lear could have been thinking when he hatched his plan. We suggest that Lear had nothing of the earth, nor indeed of the human, in mind regarding his plan. Rather, Lear seeks just the opposite; complete transcendence of the earthly realm to that on the divine. In short, Lear has conceived himself as a god. Note, for example, the use of the map in this regard. Most productions of Lear display the map of Lear's Kingdom prominently; in at least one, an enormous map is placed on the

floor of the stage and left there throughout most of the production to be trampled and torn asunder as Lear's kingdom is itself ripped apart.[3] One feature of maps is that they reduce land in such a way that humans can encompss it : as illusory as it may actually be, one has a transcendence over maps which allows one, as in Lear's case, to have complete dominion over the land and to carve it up in discreet units as if one actually were a god. Of course, in actual fact, maps are but models of land and humans do not have divine dominion over them. One's power over the land in the context of Lear's time meant that one kept vigilance over it, perhaps ruthlessly so. Lear, however, wants to absolve himself of all such responsibility and control but retain his power. That is, Lear fails to recognisize that as a human one simply cannot separate control and power; that the power emanates necessarily from the control. Regan's words at the end of scene i-- that Lear "hath ever/ But slenderly known himself" (I.i.295-6) thus reverberate with an irony which, nontheless, posits a truth about Lear. For Lear here commits that most audacious form of self-delusion by mistaking himself for a divinity. Part of the lesson Lear must eventually come to learn to return stability to the kingdom will be to reject this transcendent and divine perspective, to recognize the sin of hubris.

Besides being models which can deceive in the way alluded to above, maps are also signifiers of oreder and stability by fixing reality in a definitive way. As we shall discuss at some length below, land images form an integral component of Lear. They act as metaphors for the principals who are themselves fixed at this point, but shall, again like the land, become increasingly undifferentiated.

Dutifully, Goneril begins the love test. In a masterful stroke of irony, Shaakespeare uses her speech about value in general, and love of her father in particular to begin the process of the complete devaluation of, in the final analysis, language itself. Her speech makes two direct references to language and in both case, "I love you more than word can/Wield the matter" (I.i.57- 8), and "A love that makes breath poor, and speech/Unable" (I.i.62-3), she referes to the inability of language to express herself adequuately. Undoubtedly, her claims are in part mere puffery and self-promotion in her acquisitorial pursuit, but there is turth, again ironically, in her words. Language here is being stretched beyond its limits. Like maps, language attempts definitively to fix reality, and, in this case, that amounts to transforming love into something quantifiable. Thus, we are continually assaulted in her speech with comparative pharses such as : "more than," "dearer than," "no less than," "as much as" and so on (I.i.54-61).[4] Stretched as has been by Goneril, Regan has little space, that is little language, with which to outmanoeuvre her sister. Thus, whereas Goneril can refer to definite entities such as eyesight and space, Regan must refer to nothing other than her sister's words : I am

made of that self mettle as my sister, And prize me at her worth" (I.i 69 - 70). In doing so, Regan's language comes to refer only to language, and hence is now devoid of the referents of language; it has become those mere "external marks" on a page as Plato once derisively referred to the (written) word (275a). In consequence, all communicative value has been lost : language has now become emptied and/or vacated of meaning.[5] and once this has occurred, once it has become impossible to say anything because language is incapable of differentiating anything, Cordelia has literally nothing to say. Nothing has produced nothing; hence, in a brief interchange between Cordelia and Lear amounting to four lines of text, we get five occurrences of the word nothing.

Lear : ..... Speak.
Cordelia : Nothing, my lord.
Lear : Nothing ?
Cordelia : Nothing.
Lear : Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again. (I, i, 88-93).

Cordelia continues to refuse to say anything until Lear demands, "Mend your speech a little, Lest you may mar your fortunes" (I. i. 96-7). And, at this point, Cordelia does mend her speech, though not in the way Lear would want, since she now does say something rather than nothing, and thereby distances hereself from the mimetic crisis that is unfolding. But now she will engage in plain speech. If love is to be quantified, then let us do so. Like all quantitiable things, we must speak in finite terms - that is, if love is a quantitiable thing, then there will be only so much to go around : one must be careful in such (economic) matters or transactions to give and get the right price. Thus, she proposes to "Return those duties back as are right fit" (I. i. 97). And in this context - where Cordelia has a father and, soon, a husband - she of course cannot give all her love to her father; some, "half," will now go to her husband.

This 'plain speech' sits poorly with Lear, as it will later with respect to the plain talk of Kent because Lear is also caught up in the mimetic crisis, given as he is to demanding that he mirrors everyone's desires. Indeed, those who, like Cordelia, Kent, and France, continue to function as if language and so human social behaviour had meaning beyond themselves quickly become excluded or exclude themselves from the social system. That exclusion, most particularly of Cordelia, will, we shall argue later, be centrally important in mapping another Girardian theme onto Lear, namely the process of sacrificial victimage.

Besides displaying an emerging disorder within language, the love test also exhibits a surfacing mimetic rivalry between Lear's daughters, particularly between Goneril and Regan. In her speech, Goneril maintains that she loves her

father "As much as child e'er loved, or father found" (I. i. 59) which immediately defines her love in relation to and comparison with that of her sisters. Regan picks up this challenge by claiming that she is "made of that self mettle as my sister" and thus ought to be "prize(d) ... at her worth" (I.i. 69-70). The speeches of Goneril and Regan, then, while displaying the inability of language to get beyond and/or outside itself, simultaneously indicate that this pair fails to define themselves independently of each other. They both come to imitate the other's desire for the love and affection of their father, and the concomitant power of this love and affection entails. Goneril and Regan have, in short, become mimetic doubles of each other. This becomes increasingly the case throughout the play, particularly with regard to their respective seductions of Edmund.

The sexual interest in Edmund by either Goneril or Regan is slow to begin, but when it does begin to awaken, it does so in the context of Goneril's plan to acquire more power and her disapproval of her husband Albany's increasing discomfort with her plan. That is, at this point, Gonerils' interest in Edmund is still instrumental. Thus, when she hears of the death of Cornwall shortly after having made advances towards Edmund at IV. ii. 83- 87, she is ambivalent about its meaning for her :

> One way I like this well;
> But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
> May all the building in my fancy pluck
> Upon my hateful life. Another way,
> The news is no so tart.

That is, at this point, before the mimetic rivalry over Edmund has escalatated to the point of contagion, she is still able to keep before her mind what her initial desire was, to acquire control over the kingdom. However, this desire changes qualitatively once Regan becomes more enthralled with Edmund. And quite clearly, the interest Regan has in Edmund is founded on her perception of Edumund's interest in Goneril. Hence, in Regan's discussion with Oswald regarding Edmund in IV.v, she begins by telling Edmund that she is aware that Goneril has given "strange oelliads and most speaking looks" to Edmund (25) but that he is "more convenient .... for my hand/ Than for your Lady's" (31-2) since Regan is now a widow.

It is at this point the mimetic rivalry between Goneril and Regan over Edmund reaches such a fevered pitch that there is a qualitative switch in the perceived value of Edmund. No longer is he viewed merely as a means to an end : mimetic rivalry has constructed Edmund as the sole intrinsically valuaable object. Thus Goneril goes so far as to say at V.i. 18-9 that "I had rather lose the battle (with France) than that my sister/ Should loosen him and me."

Cordelia, conversely, remains exterior to this and other rivalries with her sisters. Just as her referential 'plain speech' marks her as different and separate from her sisters, so too her refusal to engage in her father's love test removes her from the mimetic rivalry in which her sisters are engaged.

There is a connection here between the ability - or lack thereof - to speak meaningfully and to see. In both cases what Shakespeare warns against is self - reference, where words refer only to words and vision is only of oneself, and the lack of differentiation such self-reference entails. Cordelia, in fact, makes explicit mention of the connection between speech and sight at I.i.231 : "A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue." Indeed, sight is mentioned explicitly six times in the 'banishments' scene, thrice by Lear, twice by Cordelia, and once by Kent. In the first two instances, both by Lear - "Hence and avoid my sight!" (I.i.124) and "Out of my sight!" (I.i.157) - Lear expresses both his desire, and his inability to avoid the issue at hand. Thus, Kent's response at I.i.158-9 : "See better, Lear, and let me still remain/ The true blank of thine eye."

Of course Lear refuses to accept this sage advice, preferring instead the distortions of his own sight and language. Mirrors, as a symbol of self-referential sight and the concomitant lack of differentiation such sight entails, thus become an important focus of *Lear*. Mirroring effects are established both literally and metaphorically : the Fool, for example, repeatedly functions as metaphorical mirror of Lear himself.[6] Consider the following interchange between Lear and Fool in I.iv. At this point, Lear has just recently abdicated his throne. Yet, even as early in the action as this, his abdication has produced a crisis of self- identity, a crisis which will become more acute as the play progresses. No longer sure of who or what he is, Lear now is reduced to locating himself in a mirror. That is, he now is forced to find himself in others, even if this other be his "shadow" in a mirror, in the person of the Fool, and so on. Put another way, Lear has by this point lost the ability to differentiate himself from others and, thus, looks upon others as mere extensions of himself. Differentiation, in this case between Lear and others, has been lost, and as we have argued, such loss of differentiation inevitably leads to violence. The tragic features of this malady are brought out in the following lines. After gazing in a mirror, Lear closes his eyes and says:

> Does any here know me ? This is not Lear.
> Does Lear walk thus ? Speak thus ? Where are his eyes ?
> Either his notion weakens, his discernings
> Are lethargied - Ha! waking ? 'Tis not so.
> Who is it that can tell me who I am ? (I.iv. 234-8)

And once again it is fool who replies by telling him that he is "Lear's shadow." Though Lear would wish himself asleep, though he would wish he did

not walk and speak thus, that his mental powers had not weakened and lethargied, the tragic case is that this is who Lear now is : he has become his own mimetic double. And given his previous status as the kingdom, doubling of Lear cannot but help to produce destruction. All semblance of order will eventually crumble, all things will, like the vision mirrors produce, reverse themselves. What was right is now left, a point poignantly brought out in the following prophetic passage, again by fool, as he exits in III.iii :

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water ;
When nobles are tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches suitors;
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When userers tell their gold i' th' field;
And bawds and whores do churches build;
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.
This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time. (III.ii. 81-95)

What the fool articulates here is the fact that by this point in the action all differences have been lost as a result of the escalating mimetic crisis. Of course, Lear and the Fool (or Lear and Lear) are not the only characters who mirror one another within *King Lear*. We do not have space here to trace all these pairings in the text of *Lear*. For example, the entire sub-plot concerning Gloucester's family, though it intersects with the plot of Lear's familly, also acts as a play within a play, that is, as an imitation of the 'Lear plot'. Most obviously, Lear's loss of sight is viscerally brought out in the character of Gloucester who, at the end of Act III, literally has his eyes plucked out. We do want, however, to articulate more clearly what we shall refer to as the crisis of identity brought about by the contagious component of mimesis, particularly with respect to the character of Edgar.

Recall that in Act I, Edmund has hatched and effected a plot to usurp his brother's title, and as a consequence, Edgar has had to don the disguise of a beggar, poor Tom. Early in the plot, the disguise has an obvious function : for safety's sake, Edgar must avoid recognition. Thus, in II.iii Edgar delivers the following lines :

No port is free, no place
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scrape'
I will preserve myself (3-6).

That is, his only chance for survival is to change his identity, to realize, as he says, "Edgar, I nothing am" (II.ii.21).

But there is a considerable amount of time during which Edgar continues his disguise when the only person around is his sightless father who, quite obviously, cannot recognize him visually. Why, then, outside of attribting a malevolent motive to Edgar, does he continue the disguise ? The answer here is partially provided by Francis Barker who claims that in *Lear* "disguise is more than convention ..... it is a necessity and, paradoxically, a form of being, both more and less true than usual" (8). The point here is that one's identity is dependent upon social and political conventions which establish place and rank. Once these crumble, as they do during a mimetic crisis, one's identity is lost and/or transformed, a point poignantly made by Kent, who is also forced to disguise himself, when he says :

If but as well I other accents borrow
That can my speech defense, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. (I.iv.1-4)

But here is both the irony and the tragedy of the situation; disguises are donned in order to escape the violence of the mimetic crisis and to attempt to effect positive change, and yet the disguises themselves, because they preclude recognition and increase the loss of differentiation, actually contribute to the ongoing and escalating spiral of violence. However, reacquiring one's 'original' character is impossible unless and until political and/or social order is re-established, and this order cannot be re-established, outside of some extraordinary mechanisms we shall discuss below when everyone is other than oneself. There is a sense, then, in which mimesis is a force unto itself and, like a plague, overcomes everything in its path.

The destructive forces of a mimetic crisis impact not only upon personal identity, however, but upon the land as well which itself begins to lose its identity and distinctiveness. That is to be expected, particularly in the context of this play, where personal identity and land are closely linked. We have alluded to this previously in maintaining that, at the beginning of the play, Lear is equivalent to 'the King,' and the King is dependent for his identity upon the land which he controls. Note further in this context Edmund's claim in his soliloquy in I.ii : "Well, then/ Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land" (15-6).

In this context of a discussion of land images in Lear, we return first to I.i. As already mentioned, the map in that scene operates as a signifier of a reality both stable and differentiated : land images can, however, be mapped in other ways as well. Note, for example, the expansive and hyperbolic language used to refer to land during the love test. Lear gives to Goneril, as part of her reward and as a signifier of her status, that part of his kingdom "With shadowy forests, and with champions riched, with planteous rivers, and wide-skirted meads" (I.i.64-5). To Regan he gives an "ample third of our fair kingdom,/ No less in space, validity, and pleasure/ Than that conferred upon Goneril" (I.i.80-2). But to Cordelia, who 'fails' the test, he gives nothing. That is, her exile from the family is paralleled by her exile from the land.

Note further the places in which the action occurs in this and other early scenes. They are almost all situated in places of stability and power - the castles of Lear, Gloucester, Albany and Cornwall. As the mimetic crisis begins to unfold, however, the action moves first to locations *just outside* the places of the earlier scenes. And finally, the action moves outside conventional settings altogether, and becomes increasingly situate in places of undifferentiated desolation--to woods, wild fields and open heaths.[8] Thus, the loss of personal identity, and the increasing levels of mimetic doubling, are reflected in the very land in which the characters are situated. Literally all stability has been lost.

The question now arises : How are we to escape, if we can, this horrible contagion ? How are we to end the mimetic crisis? According to Girard, the answer here is completely dependent on the kind of political state in which we are situated. In modern states, for example, we have, theoretically at least, the mechanism of the state through law enforcement institutions and the judiciary. These institutions can stop an escalation of violence, or at least contain it within acceptable limits, by acting as independent third parties who themselves are not a part of the mimetic process. That is, if one of us murders a member of your family, you are not yourself forced to retaliate, and indeed if you did, that would force a reaction from our family members, and we would be caught in the stranglehold of escalating violence. But if the state intervenes as a party who is not directly related to either of the warring factions then the issue can be resolved[9]. This is the rational behind Hobbes' claim that it is in our rational self-interest to establish a state with the power to adjudicate such issues. But pre-modern states, without this particular institution, have to seek other alternatives. By examining ancient cultures and the literature of such cultures—the drama of Ancient Greece, for example—Girard postulates that sacrifice as as institution functions in such cultures in the way that the state functions in ours, as a way to end disputes and the destruction such disputes can bring upon us. Without

our going into detail on this point, Girard says that escalating violance in pre-modern societies can be stopped only by finding an outlet for violence, a sacrificial victim, upon which/whom to vent our violence. For, as Girard maintains, although "violence is not to be denied, ...it can be directed to another object, something it can sink its teeth into" (*Violence* 13).

Having said this, we note first that when Lear abdicates his throne, he effectively negates the possibility that the intrafamily dispute can be resolved in a manner typical of what we have called above the modern state. Lear was the state, but by dividing power amongst his factioning children, there is no longer any ultimate institutional authority to resolve the dispute. Once Lear abdicates, and given the mimetic rivalry amongst all the principals, the escalating violence and the destruction of all order is inevitable. Sacrifice, then, would seem the only alternative.

However, just as it is impossible in Lear to have the institution of the state resolve the dispute, so too is it impossible for sacrifice, *operating as an institution*, to function effectively here. For, as an institution, sacrifice, like the state, is dependent upon a stable political order which has, at this point in *Lear*, been lost. Besides this, we should note that there is no textual support in *Lear* for the existence of sacrifice as an institution any way. There is, for example, no mention of a formalized set of sacrifical victims, such as the *pharmakos* of Ancient Greece, nor is there mention of any formal rules which would regulate the working of such an institution : how victims are to be chosen, in what situations they are to be sacrificed, and so on.

This is not to say, however, that sacrifice can be no help here; rather, it is to say that sacrifice cannot operate as a formal political institution. In situations where a mimetic crisis has destroyed political order, and with it political institutions, sacrifice can still operate, but only as an informal mechanism which is itself a mimesis of the institution of sacrifice. In order for this sacrificial mechanism to function effectively, that is, to bring an end to violence and thus effect a resolution to the mimetic crisis, a number of conditions must apply. Most prominently, the victim of sacrifice must be seen by the members of the various groups making up the community undergoing a mimetic crisis as innocent in the sense that the sacrifice must not be viewed by the participants as a punitive measure imposed by one of the groups but, rather, as a demand of the gods. And indeed, there is textual evidence to support the claim that characters in the drama do perceive the crisis in connection with the gods. At IV. i Gloucester laments that "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' Gods;/ They kill us for their suport" (35-6). Yet, as Edgar maintains, there is also the sense that we are at fault since "The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices/ Make instruments

to plague us" (V.iii.170-1). That is, the characters within a mimetic crisis see that crisis as emanating from both internal and external sources. Thus, the sacrificial victim will be viewed, somewhat contradictorily, as exterior to the dispute yet as its internal cause. This in part explains why the victim will initially be viewed by those in the crisis as evil, and then, in an incredible gestalt shift, as the sacred cause of peace.

In light of this, we whould argue that Cordelia functions in Lear as the sacrificial victim. Part of the reason for this is that she occupies that place of being both internal and external to the crisis itself. As a family member, and one who helps the armies of France against her sisters, she can clearly be taken as central to the dispute and to the mimetic crisis. But we must also remember, however, that Cordelia is banished from the kingdom in I.i. She is thus effectively excluded from the fractionalization and violence which occurs between I.i. and IV. vii when she returns. Furthermore, Cordelia is not simply banished from the kingdom; as Lear makes explicitly clear in I.i., she is no longer to be considered a family member: "Thou hast her, France; let her be thine for we/Have no such daughter" (274-5). As a result, Cordelia is not, strictly speaking, internal to the mimetic rivalry that has led to the crisis, but can be seen as such by the players in the dispute.

Viewing Cordelia as sacrificial victim also helps to explain the growth which Lear undergoes toward the end of the play, a growth which, though it begins before Cordelia returns, only reaches its culmination at the point of her death. And Lear, as the emodiment of order, needs to be restored to health in order for the mimetic crisis to be resolved. Lear's growth is a process of humanization, moving as he does from self-reflexivity in which others exist only as mirrors of and impediments to the fulfillment of his desires, to the acknowledgement of those others as autonomous individuals. The process appropriately begins when Lear can sink no further in the mire of self-absorption. Lear's madness, if it is not caused by, is certainly exacerbated and hastened by his failure to achieve his desires which, though they began as mirrors reflecting the desires of those around him, are now nothing more than reflections of everyone else's desires. His desires, therefore, are mirrors in which there are no referents except others' desires and, thus, no way in which to construct an autonomous, and so meaningful, existence.

At the height of the storm, Lear is removed from the society that is completely commited to the mimetic crisis. Circumstances have forced Lear to survive in an asocial, natural, wild environment which demands that he rely on his own natural predelections. Thrown back on his natural self at the height (or depth) of a madness that signifies removal from social norms, Lear begins to

develop a view of others and the world around him that is directed away from the self and, thus, is independent of the society from which circumstances have excluded him.

The first sign of that occurs as Lear urges both Edgar and the Fool to seek shelter before he does. His concern for others' safety has no motive other than his genuine humane concern for the "poor naked wretches" of the world:

> Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How Shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window'd raggednes, defend you
> From seasons such as this. O! I have ta'en
> Too little care of this. Take physic, Pomp...
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
> And show the Heavens more just. (III.iv.28-33)

Apparently driven by a burgeoning clear-sightedness of sympathy and humility, Lear now seems to identify with those wretches from whom he would have remained aloof by achieving godhead and so to have begun to move beyond the mimetic crisis. That change in Lear is evident in his challenge to "Pomp" (III.iv.33), the accoutrements of rank, that follows from his recognition that "The art of our necessities is strange,/And can make vile things precious" (III.ii.70-1).

That is not to say, however, that at that point, Lear has emerged from his madness with the insight that is indicative of the growth he demonstrates by the end of the play. Indeed, it is not until Act V, just prior to Cordelia's death, which signifies her sacrificial victimage, that Lear will fully emerge from the mimetic crisis. At that point, no longer driven by desire for self- gratification, Lear reestablishes a relationship with Cordelia because he sees clearly the possibilities for individual fulfillment inherent in rising above the chaos of the society in which all is set in motion by self-reflexive desires. So when Lear says to Cordelia that they will "take upon's" the mystery of things,/As if we were God's spies....." (V.iii.16-7), he no longer seeks the destructive godhead characteristic of his mimetic mode. Rather, he seeks to position himself and Cordelia in a self-contained relationship that is protected from that mode and its symptomatic pathology, chaos, which continues to drive the social and political orders and to which the ongoing war attests. Although Lear's languauge seems reminiscent of his desire for godhead ("As if we were god's spies") (V.iii.17), and although he speaks as if he has positioned himself in the midst of scoiety's comings and goings, ("we'll talk with them too, / Who loses and who wins;

who's in, who's out") (V.iii.14-5), the fact is that Lear happily selfenclosed and so protected from the malignacny of society.[10]

The literal prison is, of course, the one to which Edmund sends them immediately following Lear's speech. But for all of its power to prevent escape, the literal prison is also, and more imporantly, a *hortus conclusus*, a refuge within the temporal, social order from the nightmare life has become. Its temporality distinguishes that space from the destructive and delusionary space Lear seeks earlier as, in his hubris, he tries to make himself a god by remaking himself in the image of those who reflect his own desires. Even in the midst of the nightmare, Lear's desire now mirrors the innocent desires characteristic of the prelapsarian Garden: "We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage . . . . so we'll live,/ And pray, and sing, and old tales, and laugh/ At gilded butterflies . . . " (V.iii.9-13). And while the yearning for a return to the primal innocence of Eden may be a yearning for that which can only be a linguistic construct, a mythical reality, that which is only psychologically possible, nonetheless, Lear's language indicaates a radical change in his psychology. The extent of Lear's growth is signified by the way in which language has had its power to signify restored by Lear as he seeks a paradise, even if it is at best a linguistic or mythic construct.

Indeed, even before Lear completely emerges from his madness, Cordelia describes him as "child-changed," as having become childlike (IV.Vii.17). The change, of course, suggests that in his madness Lear seems to have lost his adult rational facility. But it also suggests that he has lost the self-reflexivity that characterizes his society.No longer raging either inwardly as at the beginning of the play, or outwardly as he was on the heath at the height of the mimetic crisis, he has found a peace of mind that seems to derive from his having discarded the clothing of the mode Girard locates as characteristic of the social and political orders as in his madness he discards his clothes and finds solace in his recognition that "unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal ..." (III, iv.109-10). As he emerges from the sleep that lays to rest his madness, he has been dressed in "fresh garments" (IV.vii.22).

Immediately prior to that statement, Lear describes Edgar, the Fool and himself as "sophisticated." Kenneth Muir glosses the word as "adulterated" (122,n.108). Acknowledging the radical brutishness of humaan beings inevitably caught in the Girardian social matric of desire, Lear tries to extricate himself from that matrix by shedding the trappings of society altogether.[11] As we suggest above, it would seem that when his madness is most intense Lear has begun to see clearly. That is borne out by his statement moments earlier that "When the mind's free/ The body's delicate" (III.iv.11-2).

That freedom of mind is made possible because Lear has begun to disentangle himself from the constraints experienced by those who live within the mimetic order.[12] The process initiated in III continues uthroughout the remainder of the play and culminates in Act V. Prior to that, however, Lear encounters Gloucester. Although he is still suffering from madness, the growing clarity of Lear's perception enables him to respond to Gloucester in the same vein as he did to Edgar and the Fool in Act III. Gloucester becomes for Lear an individual with an identity that is independent of Lear's "I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester... (IV.iii.179). As it is in his dealings with Edgar and the Fool on the heath, Lear's acknowledgement of Gloucester is the consequence of his having moved beyond the need for eyes, the symbolic if not literal origin and means of development of the mimetic crisis. As Lear recognizes Gloucester, then, he sets aside vision, telling Gloucester to "take my eyes" (IV.vi.178).[13] The world is for Lear no longer constructed in his own image, and he approaches Gloucester by seeming to have grasped the necessity of suffering the pangs of rebirth before they can be fully restored. The understanding that began on the heath has developed even further. Once he is fully restored as the consequence of being reunited with Cordelia and being healed by her love, he is psychologically liberated and, thus, psychologically able to reconstruct his life within the linguistic, mythical paradise which he and Cordelia have created for themselves.

The self-knowledge at the heart of the restoration takes the form of differentiation, most specifically seen in Lear's acknowledgment that Cordelia is a clearly distinctive other self, not merely a reflection in whom Lear continues to see his desire reflected. Fittingly, that recognition is seen when Lear kneels to Cordelia (IV.vii.59). The self-effacement entailed by the gesture becomes all the more powerful an indicator of Lear's humiliation because of his implicit acknowledgement of Cordelia's stature which has little to do with her regal position as the Queen of France and everything to do with his understanding of the superiority of the capacity she has to love him as a distinct human being.

Despite the abundance of first-person pronouns which Lear uses in the reconciliation scene (there are thirty-one in the space of twenty-four lines), it is apparent that Cordelia's love and, thus, her capacity to forgive have completed the healing process that began on the heath by showing Lear both that love of an other is possible and how that love entails a recognition of the other as an autonomous being. Lear says :

> Do not laugh at me;
> For, as I am a man,
> I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia. (IV.vii. 68-70)

Lear's renewed sense of Cordelia's value as an independent human being leads to his desire to establish the paradise in which he and Cordelia would co-exist as individual equals and signals his refusal of the mimetic order which nonetheless continues to drive society. When the utterly gratuitious death of Cordelia occurs, and she is carried onstage by her father, Lear again becomes the poor bare-forked animal that he was on the heath, responding in the only way he can - - by howling preturnaturally (V.iii.256) as if he has moved outside society altogether and now stands alone as the one man who understands not only the horror of his own life and what he has done in society, but equally the natural and thus asocial potential to love or desire another as herself. The mirroring of self that characterizes the mimetic crisis in the play is suspended, if only briefly and at best darkly, as Lear calls for a mirror in which to see Cordelia's breath :

She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives. (V.iii. 261-3)

The mirror, then, becomes the means by whiich Lear can acknowledge that Cordelia has life which means that she exists independently of Lear. For Cordelia no longer mirrors Lear's desire for self-aggrandizement by reflecting his love of self. Horribly, because it is too late, Lear now finds he loves her as an autonomous individual because of the qualities she embodied as Cordelia : "Her voice was ever soft,/Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman" (V.iii. 272-3).

Lear's emergence from the mimetic crisis and the pathos that entails, fully reveals the play's tragic vision by reinforcing the Girardian hypothesis. Lear attempted to remove himself and Cordelia from the mimetic order that governs society. But he cannot. When individuals band together to form a society, presumably for mutual protection among other things, inevitably, the triangular model of mimetic desire we describe at the outset of this paper, is set in place. Try as one might, Girard insists, living outside that model is impossible. *Lear* makes the point.

In their reconciliation, made possible because Lear has seen the value of loving Cordelia as hereself, Lear and Cordelia have resistted succumbing to the mimetic crisis or, indeed, to mimetic desire at all. Instead, they seek to live apart according to a set of principles whereby individuals do not shape their lives in the image of others' desires but, rather, live as self-motivated, autonomous human beings. The potency of mimetic desire is such, however, that it destorys Lear and Cordelia, despite the brief moment of happiness they discover in carving out a separate space. As if to suggest that the attempt itself is an affront to the ommipotence of the social forces which Girard describes in Shakespeare, *King*

Lear, finally, refuses any such attempt, insisting, instead, that those who try will inevitably be destroyed. That is, we suggest, the tragic vision Shakespeare gives us. At best, human beings are deluded into thinking that they can escape mimesis and a permanent social equilibrium outside of mimesis is possible. But Shakespeare closes his play on a note that strikes none of that optimism. The young are left, with their "present business" of "general woe" (V.iii. 317-8), recognizing only that "The oldest hath borne most" (V.iii.325), which is to say that the young see clearly only what is most obvious. That they "Shall never see so much, nor live so long" (V.iii.326), Girard shows us, can be little more than an empty wish.

Notes and References

1. Attempting to deal thoroughly with the relation between political and social order would take us too far afield. Girard, following Durkheim, argues against contractarians such as Hobbes, Lock and Rousseau. While the contractarians argue that political and soical order are completely interdependent, Girard appears to argue that social order runs deeper than, and is presupposed by, political order in the sense that political order will always be destroyed by the destruction of social order, whereas the converse is not necessarily the case. As we argue later, some social mechanisms such as sacrificial victimage, continue to operate even in the absence of political order.
2. Girard's conception of mimesis is not to be confused with that notion of mimesis which runs from Plato and Aristotle through the whole of Western aesthetics. That is, Girard's conception of mimesis does not involve a representation of some external reality (or, as in Plato's case, a representation of a representation). Rather, for Girard, mimesis is an hypothesis about desire in a way to be explained below.
3. See Rosenberg (53) for more on this particular production and in general on the use and importance of maps in various productions of *Lear*. Rosenberg refers to Orson Welles' 1956 production.
4. For more on this point, see Rosenberg (50-4)
5. For a more extended discussion of a similar point, see Eagleton.
6. See Shickman 75-86 for an analysis of mirroring effects in *King Lear*, particularly as they apply to the Fool.
7. Note the similarity between this speech and one on a similaar topic in *Troilus and Cressida*. In that paarticular speech, Ulysses discusses the interaction between violence and differentiation in terms of the concept of "Degree". "O when Degree is shaked/Which is the ladder to all high designs,/The enterprise is sick! how could communities,/ Degrees in schools, and brotherhood in cities,/Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,/The primogenitive and due of birth,/Prerogative of age, crowns, scepters, laurels,/But be degree, stand in authentic place? Take but degree away, untune that string,/And, hark, what discord follows! Each thing meets/ In mere oppugnancy:/... Force should be right; or rather right and wrong/Between whose endless jar justice resides,/ Should lose their names, and so should justice too." Cited in Girard, *Violence* 50-1.
8. For more on this, see Barker.
9. Girard states : "We owe our good fortune to our... judicial system, which serves to deflect the menace of vengeance. The system does not suppress vengeance; rather, it effectively limits it to a single act of reprisal... The decisions of the judiciary are invariably presented as the final act of vengeance," *Violence* 15.
10. The "mystery" to which Lear refers is a mystery because it is of such a different order of human experience/perception than the society embraces. Lear's clear-sightedness enables him to differentiate

those two states; thus his use of the simile "as if we were God's spies" rather than a statement of equivalence between himself and Cordelia and the transcendent being who are God's spies.

11. We argue below that the attempt must necessarily fail, that the pervasiveness and necessity of the Girardian society destroys those who seek to live apart from it.

12. Muir, 116, n.11, points to a similarity between Shakespeare's use of "free" in line 11 and Middleton and Rowley's use of it in their *A Fair Quarrel*, I.1. 399 : "Then 'tis no prison when the mind is free. " The trope is, of course, the basis for the Cavalier poet Richard Lovelace's "To Althea : From Prison" which appeared in 1642, 34 years after the first appearance of *King Lear*. In Lovelace's poem, the speaker celebrates his having achieved a psychological transcendence of space similar to Lear and Cordelia's *hortuus conclusus* which enables him to escape the growing social unrest of the 1640s. In similar fashion, Lear, too, has escaped the horror of the war which is about to destroy both Cordelia and himself.

13. Stanley Cavell points out that what happens in Lear's confrontation with Gloucester is not simply an "access of knowledge. " Gloucester has "become not just a figure 'parallel to Lear, but Lear's double; he does not merely represent Lear, but is psychologically identical with him. So that what comes to the surface in this meeting is not a related story, but Lear's submerged mind" (52). We agree with Cavell's argument, but would add that it is because Lear has begun to differentiate that he is able to see Gloucester as the register of what he has done.

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The Baumgarten Corruption

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Philosophy

I came to Philosophy from Mathematics as a research student in the 1960's because of my interest in many of its central questions, because of its concern with logical analysis and argument, and because I assumed that Philosophy, like Mathematics, is a subject : amenable to the systematic pursuit of knowledge. The histories of the two subjects have many important people in common : Zeno, Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Bertrand Russell. I loved paradoxes and riddles and the dismantling of sophistries. I started in the peripheral territory of Philosophy of Science and moved on to Metahysics, Mind and Epistemology. Soon Wittgenstein loomed larger than any one else. I read and concurred with Stanley Cavell's description of the later wittgenstein as confessional, which may be paraphrased thus :

> Metaphysical speculations are illusions of a metaphorical imagination, and their critiques are phenomenological remarks.

This brought me to my first professional crisis. For if this account was true, and I have never heard it argued otherwise, then Philosophy is not like Mathematics at all. It does not proceed to develop and accumulate arguable theses. It does not seek and find knowledge. It presides over a storehouse of perennial riddles. It proposes and disposes of Aunts Sally. I could see that the process was illuminating and testing. I could see that there might be spin-off skills of conceptual analysis, which one might apply in debunking Astrology, for example. I could see that the riddles provided plenty of material for examining undergraduates in examinations. But I could not see how Philosophy could be made suitable for genuine research.

When I voiced some of these concerns to my tutors and professors my alarm was only increased. I was advised not to treat Philosophy itself as an object of enquiry. Doubt the existence of tea cups, time and other humans; but never query Philosophy. I shuffled off to the peripheral subject of aesthetics to lick my wounds. My interest in art is as old as may interest in mathematics and somewhere down the line I anticipated scope for throwing light on the relationship between these two subjects. I started by accepting the *status quo* notion that fine art was the pursuit of aesthetic significance, whatever that may be, and resolved to get a clearer idea of what this might mean.

Philosophical Aesthetics

Philosophy is ambivalent about aesthetics. It seems to hold a traditional place for it alongside Metaphysics and Ethics, going back to classical Greek times. But in modern times aesthetics has languished in a marginal condition. Anthony O'Hear, for example, does not even mention it in his Penguin guide to contemporary philosophy; while Anthony Flew enters the following comments about it in his Pan Dictionary of Philosophy : "contemporary aesthetics has... a strong analytical flavour... (with) closely focused essays .... (but) has not yet found a wholly assured place. Nevertheless, we are surely right to consider aesthetics as central and as philosophical as metaphysics or ethics. If the literature does not carry this conviction perhaps it is Philosophy's fault. I waded in, full of enthusiasm."

Almost immediately I made a strange discovery. I found that if you take any representative book in the field (I took Richard Wollheim's *Art and its Objects*), you will find that threaded through its otherwise abstract arguments about generalities there will be a more or less liberal sprinkling of particular art examples which the author introduces any way of illustration. We can call the complete set of such examples in a given book or essay the *paradigm sample* of the author. This set will serve to define by implication the author's idea or definition of art. This is important evidence, because modern philosophers generally renounce the explicit act of defining art. And, what invariably emerages from the paradigm sample of any author in this field is that the intended idea of art is the well known notion of fine art. But what is strange is a further observation that I made : if you systematically go through the book and substitute the author's examples of fine art with arbitrary items of imagery and communication which are clearly not fine art, such as billboard advertisements, instruction manuals, newspapers, tv shows and so on...the essential arguments of the author remain unaffected.

Therefore, what seems to all concerned to be a theory of fine art appreciation turns out to be about communication in general. Such concepts as meaning and intention are put through the logico-semantic mill, unravelled and dissected until standard paradoxes are conjured up to befuddle the brain. But there is no clue here on, say, beauty.

This contrast between meaning in art and aesthetics in art may be clearly illustrated by a great example of art theory outside Philosophy, namely the work of that most respected methodologist of art history, Erwin Panofsky. He reasons, quite rightly, that the contemporary viewer's feelings and impressions about a renaissance painting when looking at it are no guide to determining the meaning of the picture. Rather, that task is one of pure historical research, involving the proper analysis of ample and collated documents to establish the symbolism of

the time together with specifics of the commission. But here is the rub. Such meaning will just as well reside in a crude work as in a fine one. Therefore, meaning is not peculiar to fine art, and may even be not necessary. So those elusive matters of quality, which Philosophy avowedly and specifically seeks in 'art' as opposed to mere communication, go by without trace in such analyses.

The main difference between the concerns of Panofsky and philosophy in this matter, however, is that Philosophy is supposed to be about what is fine in art. Not only that, but there seemed, and still seems, to be a blissful ingnorance of this global logical error. And so at first, this strange discovery appeared to be a dramatic find; but after a while I sensed that this error of logical typing, a generality posing as a particularity, is more of a clue to the real problem than an end in itself. I decided to file the observation away as the following dual principle :

A typical essay in contemporary philosophical aesthetics (a) implies a fine art definition of art, but (b) applies to wider and different definitions of art.

My attention then drifted to a more debtable line of attack. I began to think what I now suggest - for here my case enters the present tense - that it is the very idea of fine art that is the problem. I should explain at this point that my thoughts have always been directed at visual art in particular but I do not regard this as a serious loss of generality in my arguments. On the contrary, to generalise the concept of art by compounding the diverse fine arts rides in the face of important differences between them, which I will touch on later. Furthermore, what troubles me is the notion of fine art in a contemporary context; now and throughout the 20th century. The term seems to me to become problematic only in the age of modernism. There has always been ambiguity in the epithet 'fine', a potentially misleading combination of social and aesthetic meaning. In some times past and in some places, it is reasonable to suppose that the social fine and the aesthetic fine were in unison. Quality street had quality art. There is no mystery in this, so long as we do not forge a necessary link in our minds on this purely contingent association. In our own age, however, the fine of our senses, and it would seem that the two meanings have gone their separate ways.

The trouble with this otherwise acceptable divorce is that the ambiguity is exploited so that one kind of fine can be made to masquerade as another, and one kind of value steal the clothes of another.

On the face of it, contemporary visual fine art may seem to defy definition, because theories and practices are numerous and conflicting. Nevertheless, ostensive definition does exist in the canon, which is firmly headed by the official cosmopolitan collections of modern art. In the course of the century, at great expense and in full public view, this canon has grown by successive innovatory

additions, consolidating all the while towards a fixed fact. If this repository of artefacts and its attendant documentation has philosophical weaknesses it must face up to them and cannot resort to rewriting itself. The books are cooked, with the irreversibility of a hard-boiled egg.

What troubles me is this : to call the art of this canon 'fine' and to devote philosophical focus to it implies that it is a quality of art, when in fact it is most definitely a kind of art. The canon records a severely exclusive purpose known as modernism.

Art

My favourite definition of art is that given by the Philosopher George Dickie, who used Duchamp's urinal to illustrate his institutional definition of art, which I paraphrase thus :art is whatever is exhibited in the appropriate galleries. Dickie's definition is something of a terminal addition to that timehonoured gamut of competing formulae : mimesis, symbol, expression, formal innovation, social comment, and so on. Clearly, Dickie does have in mind that well known notion, fine art. Moreover, his institutional definition does seem to me to have the merit of reliably mapping the widespread educated idea of art. Picasso is in, Escher is out - you know the one?

However, Dickie's definition delivers a neat *reductio ad absurdum* of the educated concept of art. For, according to his formula, in contemporary art, unlike (say) contemporary transport, anything goes. Does Dickie notice this ? Apparently not. Philosophers are after all wedded to paradox. But mathematicians get excited. They scent discovery in the air. This is how, according to legend, mathematics as we know it got started, springing into existence from the loins of Greek philosophy in the 6th century BC, with an argument from absurdity; about, as it happens, the square roots of unsquare numbers. What mathematicians do when faced with paradox and absurdity in a conclusion is to reason that therefore some or all of the premises must be wrong. In our case, the paradox that art can be anything, it is the fine art model of art which is the faulty premise. The problem with it is quite simply that the idea of contemporary fine art has the locus of a social distinction, not an aesthetic criterion of quality or value.

At other times and in other places there are plausible economic explanations for expecting artistic excellence to be the reserve of a social elite, and to serve its purposes and messages, but not here and now, not since the growth of manufacture and mass communication changed civilisation so drastically. Fine art may once have been a quality of art but is now, and has been for a century or so, a clearly demarcating type of art. We should see that fine art, circumscribed by its own particular goals, styles, institutions, and contexts, is just one of many

distinctive kinds of art : such as packaging, advertising, fashion, movies, tv, scientific illustration, street architecture, and so on. As with all kinds, fine art has its own purposes and practices from which the conventions and the standards are derived by and within which quality evaluation makes sense. Thus to call any kind of art fine is a misnomer. One might add that in so far as fine art in modern times has striven to differentiate itself in appearance and purpose from mass/popular commercial art it has been driven into some very quirky corners. Fine is in danger of meaning not.

If, as the Philosopher has, you attach your idea of art to the institutions of gallery art and if gallery art should wither almost without trace under the impact of modern culture then your idea of art must wither with it, as it surely has. To remedy such a predicament it is necessary to start again and cast out the very assumptions on which the whole sorry theory is based; namely, the fine art model of art. The thing to do is to firmly insist that art is all art, with all styles, all purposes, all creeds, and all qualities. This is to give art a descriptive meaning not prescriptive. In making this move we unravel a great mystery, we break a spell, we heal a friend, we return to earth. We detach an ingrained and confused pursuit of quality from its tortured grip upon a highly special, not to say highly suspect, case of art. We separate the question of quality from the meaning of art. The word now works to denote, as a value-free concept of universal human significance, a most basic and important subclass of artefact. The word now answers to this simple question : is it, by any stretch of the imagination, an image or an ornament ? If so, then it is of the genus art.

This is surely how an Anthropologist or an Archaeologist classifies items from another society. this is a graven image, this is a plough, this is a boat..:. The questions of kind and the questions of quality do not get confused. If we were to approach our own society and subsocieties in this frame of mind the scales would fall from our eyes. We would realise in a flash that by the descriptive definition of art, we are up to our eyes awash in art. Our former notion of art shrinks from being a false universe to just another player in the real world. In our ardent desire to pursue the matter of aesthetics this wider view of the concept sets us free. We are at last released from that ascetic diet of 'challenging' formal innovations served up in white walled shrines, whose flavour and decorcum more readily suggests aesthetic nemesis than a banquet of the senses. Now our theory is free to acknowledge the full scale and range of ornament and image-making in this or any other society, warts and all.

That is to say, art is not essentially unique, original, rare, expansive, beautiful, moral, spiritual, painterly, expressive, difficult, challenging or any other attribute. It is not a quality at all, it is a category. Art is a vital and basic type

of diverse human activity which we distinguish from other basic types, such as writing, agriculture and transport. Art is a non- linguistic cognitive modality of all humans in all societies and sub-societies in all places at all times. Thus, the images of Lascaux, the murals of Egypt, the reliefs of Assyria, the sculpture of Greece, the altar pieces of renaissance Europe and so on... all belong to the concept of art for the simple reason that they are all images. The need have nothing else in common. The aims and values of societies are numerous and varied and ever- changing, but a picture, as we know, can be worth a thousand words in all manner of contexts. This is the cognitive definition of art.

Incidentally, a millennial and multicultural account of art history encounters an interesting and fundamental polarity of image versus ornament. It is not just that there is an ideological schism, as between Islam and Christendom on this dichotomy. You might say that the geometry of depiction is simply incompatible with the geometry of decoration, though some of the most entertaining artists have played with combining the two. What is interesting is that these two opposing goals of picture and pattern have coexisted for too long to say which came first or which succeeds which. Not the least affront committed by Western art theory is the way ornament is written out of history, as if it never happened, or as if it were a lower form of life. We certainly cannot allow this myopia to continue. So let us lose no time supplementing that millennial list of images employed in my argument just now with some examples of ornament : an Islamic mosaic, a Celtic mirror engraving, a Maori carving, a Japanese screen and so on.

How should a history of art which takes in this list of images and ornaments past or foreign proceed to the here and now ? This question should be child's play, akin to those simple canceptual question should be child's play, akin to those simple conceptual quizzes of the type : complete the following, or spot the odd one out. But the official answer has long been and still is the crazy non-sequitur of 'modern art'. This is like telling a history of transport which disqualifies motors along the way and ends up in study of dressage as exemplary modern transport. It is surely just as absurd as this to tell a history of art which trails off into the usual shaggy dog story of contemporary fine art - which runs through so many Parisian and New York isms before declaring itself dead, sometime in the 20's the 60's or the 80's. When future archaeologists unearth our civilisation they will find a dazzling art in worship of motor cars and comic book heroes; while what we in the 20th century have seen fit to call 'modern art' will emerge from the rubble, if at all, only as an obscure and minor sideshow.

The real history of art should read as follows :..... after oil paint came printing, and then several centuries later photography, followed in our very own

century by a media explosition ! The means and the output of contemporary image-making may have changed the experience of being human out of all recognition, but it is still the same old diverse cognitive modality.

But wait a moment. What happens, I hear you wonder, to the question of quality in all of this ? Surely the whole point of calling a Picasso art and a pin-up not art is to make a quality distinction ? My response to such a question is to insist that 'art' must name a category not a quality. We can answer with descriptive freedom that one is modernist art and the other is pornographic art. That they are both art, however, as opposed to (say) writing, is clearly not in doubt. Questions of quality and moral values, of course, can and do apply within all kinds of art, but by the same token they are not settled in advance for any kind. Debate on these questions can proceed all the more swiftly, or more accurately, can only proceed at all, if descriptive labels are not nailed to prescriptive prejudice. The prescriptive use of 'art' is built on philosophical quicksand. The prescriptive use of 'art', like other emotive terms of even greater social import, is not so much a mistake as a strategy deployed by judgements that have no justification. Those who peddle it invariably forget or deny the relativity and subjectivity of taste, and predictably end up confusing quality with kind.

How else, for example, can you explain the selection of contents in those worthy national collections of 20th century art, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York or the Tate Gallery in London, which may well have trawled the cream of their kind but whose kind is highly particular, if not most peculiar ?

As mentioned earlier, I use 'art' in the manner of a school- child's time-table; that is, to denote something visual, as opposed to verbal, aural, oral, culinary, tactile, kinaesthetic (muscular), and so on. I recognise that this word is also used in the wider sense of 'the arts', and it is true that what I have been saying about visual art has parallel applications in the other arts. The case of 'serious music' (Schoenberg to Berio), for example, is strongly similar to that of 'modern art'. On the other hand there are acute differences to beware of. Thus, 'popular music' has so many points of similarity with 'serious music' that any history of music, analogous to the history of art, which excludes popular music can be easily undermined. Do they not both entertain ticket-paying audiences in concert venues with vocal and instrumental performances of rhythms and harmonies ? But in the case of visual art, parallels are less simple. Earlier on I introduced Escher into my arguments to counterpoise Picasso because Eshcer's art is a famous case of non-modernist art in modern times which in almost every respect other than its non-modernism bears comparison to gallery art. However, the bulk of typical contemporary visual art functions in ways quite unlike gallery

art. I have in mind advertising, packaging, fashion, tv, cinema, video, magazines and the styling of consumer goods. This is what occupies our pictorial and ornamental intelligence. This is what we idolize. this is the actual art on our time, as opposed to whatever we might wish it to be.

With due caution in transposing our argument, we may nevertheless gain from forays into other territory. The case of visual art may be the most exasperating of the arts and so some relief may be gained from looking at comparable arguments which have gained a firmer foothold in our minds. The word 'culture', for example, has a parallel life to 'art'. It too has a conflict of two basic and opposing meanings, the prescriptive versus the descriptive. It too originated as a generic term but was bent in high society to convey a spurious value-judgement. In the struggle to rescue 'art' from nonsense we can be guided by what has happened to 'culture'. The prescriptive meaning has been firmly pushed back by the efforts of sociologists in favour of the descriptive meaning of 'culture'. The prescriptive meaning has been firmly pushed back by the efforts of sociologists and anthropologists in favour of the descriptive meaning of 'culture', which has wide currency now, and referes to everything that a given people do and the way that they do it, especially in contrast to the way other people do it.

I leave these parallels and differences for the reader to explore. More importantly here, we must register the fact that 'art' also has a much broader meaning yet, a meaning which is very important. Namely, art as opposed to nature. This meaning includes anything and everything to which humans have given form in contrast to the phenomena of the natural universe. This is the etymological root of 'art', stemming from a reference to handiwork, as was appropriate in former times. But today this meaning must extend to manufacture and machines and is unambiguously signified by 'artefact'. I shall return to this deep distinction in a while, but let us first give an account of the troubled meaning of 'aesthetic'.

The Baumgarten Corruption

The state of intellectual dereliction which I have been describing, in which quality is confused with kind and in which nonsense prevails in our theories of art, may be regarded as a specifically modern condition. It has grown up with the industrial age, and it is convenient to think of it starting life about 1750 when a minor German Philosopher A.G. Baumgarten coined a corrupted Greek word 'aesthetic' to refer to the study of what was already known as Taste, as in 'good taste' as opposed to mere taste; i.e., discriminating appreciation of the good in art. The root meaning in Greek, by utter contrast, had signified all things perceived by the senses, as opposed to conceived by the intellect : *aestheta kai noeeta,* percept versus concept. The Greek meaning is a division of knowledge.

Today we recognise the same fundamental cognitive fault line running between 'concrete' and 'formal', and similar terminology.

The major German Philosopher Immanuel Kant was on hand to deplore Baumgarten's act of verbal and conceptual vandalism, but to no avail. The Baumgarten corruption spread from German to English, and from philosophy-speak to general educated parlance. What had been the name for a basic epistemological distinction, something which you might expect Philosophers to guard carefully, was turned into the label for a specious science of Taste.

We all speak Baumgartean now and so not surprisingly we cannot make sense of aesthetics. In our minds it has become a shadowy ghost notion variously confused with religion, ethics, riches, and social status. Kant had warned that there could be no such Baumgartean science of Taste with reasons equivalent to the adage that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. But in any case, the ensuring speculation on the good in art has proved to be a strange pursuit, as the quarry was destined to metamorphose at every opportunity, starting with classical ideals and ending in a state of fully reduced modernism. This is a journey which began in an 18th century aristocratic devotion to beauty and ended in an alliance of investors and artocrats affirming the most excruciating anti-art ever devised.

Today the dictinory gives three meanings for *aesthetic.* The first is the Greek original and may be taken as synonymous with *sensible.* (as opposed to reasonable) The dictionary declares this meaning obsolete, and yet it lives on precisely in 'anaesthetic' and 'kinaesthetic'. Obsolete or no, this is the only meaning which survives gunuine philosophical appraisal. The second and third meanings refer respectively to beauty and to art, both derived from Baumgarten's corruption. Significantly enough, Chambers dictionary associates one with affectation and the other with pretence. We have looked at the pitfalls of a prescriptive notion of art above, so now we turn to beauty.

Beauty

Philosophy abandoned beauty in favour of art. Thus Edmund Burke's essay on the sublime and the beautiful, contemporary with but uncontaminated by Baumgarten's corruption, and much admired for a while, was to have no Philosophical heirs within the Western mainstream and is now mostly forgotten. His aim was to elucidate the experience of beauty by, among other things, determining what principle unites the many and varied objects which excite us in this way. All the objects which Burke cites by way on illustration of his arguments are, in complete contrast to Philosophy now, items of natural form rather than works of art. Though Burke's sample of objects befits the taste of a young 18th century gentleman soon to take up a life-long and brilliant career in the British parliament, they nevertheless serve his general purposes. Among

other things, he provides a lovely counter- argument to the age-old and recurrent theory that visual beauty inheres in certain geometric proportions. He concludes with a mathematical proposition of his own : that beauty is small and smooth.

While this seemingly silly thesis would fall just as quickly to counter-example as the doctrine of proportions, it has to be said that modern mathematics has breathed much life and meaning into smallness and smoothness, meaning which Burke perhaps could never have imagined, yet which seems to support his theme. I am thinking of that whole branch of mathematics going under the label of *optimal form* which studies minimal states and equilibria. Balance, economy, and elegance are all conditions traditionally associated with beauty, and now we have an elaborate and far reaching mathematics of such ideas, which finds that the forms of nature on every scale answer to optimal equations. At the same time, those contrasting ideas of the great and the rough which Burke associates with the sublime in nature have also found contemporary mathematical expression in the even more recent theories of *catastrophe* and *chaos* (both misnomers, by the way) and *fractals.* It is not too far-fetched, I think, to say that here is where one should look for ideas.

Also parked outside the confines of modern philosophical aesthetics awaiting rediscovery we find Ananda Coomaraswamy. He wrote about classical Indian art at the beginning of this century and was untouched by the declining theory of art I have been describing. For him, and for the tradition he writes about, beauty was legitimate purpose of art, to say the least. Though he suffers from the fault of devoting his philosophical efforts on the subject of beauty exclusively to the realm of art, as opposed to nature, what he has to say on the subject is well worth reading. Coomaraswamy gives voice to a number of perennial truths of the subject which might serve us as axioms when struggling to rebuild a theory. Here are seven :

> It is very generally held that natural objects...and works of intentional art can be classified as beautiful or ugly. And yet no general principle of classification has ever been found.
>
> Art is good which is good of its kind.
>
> Civilized art is not more beautiful than savage art.
>
> We must admit the relativity of taste.
>
> Beauty may be discovered anywhere.
>
> The vision of beauty is spontaneous...cannot be achieved by deliberate effort.
>
> There are no degrees of beauty.

Coomaraswamy was a major interpreter of Indian culture to the West, and was especially keen to stress those values missing from our, by contrast,

alienated view of nature. His thoughts on beauty quoted above were mostly formulated with art in mind, but they do extend very well to the appreciation of nature. And, where Burke's suggestions point us towards a geometry of the objects of beauty, Coomaraswamy reminds us that beauty is also only ever a state of mind in the spectator. The dreadful corollary of the subjectivity and spontaneity which Coomaraswamy postulates as axiomatic, is that we can also fail to see beauty when it stares us in the face.

My own inclination at this juncture is to say that the philosophical preoccupation with the good in art has proved itself to be a trap and should now be more than counterbalanced in favour of a turn to nature. It is not just that, say, a patch of ground left long enough alone invariably results in greater beauty than any act of gardening can achieve, it is also the worry I have that we neglect the logic which subordinates art to nature. And what is more, in the great industrial lunge to replace as much of nature within our grasp as we can with tarmac, brick, concrete, corrugated iron, paint and so on it has become increasingly difficult for the majority of folk to witness nature. Might we forget that by comparison with the inordinately great and minutely small organisation of things in nature, the most sophisticated artefacts are but crude toys ?

It is a long way from the Museum of Modern Art in New York to the upper slopes of a Himalayan mountain. I give this as the distance and difference between Philosophy and beauty. The Philosopher has followed the cult of high art all the way from genteel revivals of Greek ideals, through waves of systematic bodily decomposition, to its final assemblage of inscrutable artefacts at the official consmopolitan galleries. The rock climber, by contrast, camped out in some high uninhabited valley, can pause a while on a fine day from thoughts of sport and be struck by the beauty of such a landscape. It is a sad fact that today we are obliged to travel so far from civilisation to encounter so much wilderness. When the Apollo astronauts described their close encounters with the Moon, an encounter with what most of us would suppose to be among the bleakest of sights ever to meet human eyes, they were clearly moved by a great beauty and tried to convey as much in words. Of course such things are almost ineffable. But the main point is surely this : they encountered a very large piece of ancient natural form in pristine condition.

And so we have firmly returned to the ground of our subject, that fundamental distinciton of artefact vs nature. The philosophical urgency here is that in our present environmental crisis it is precisely the artefact which despoils and poisons the nature. Art, as in 'visual art', adequately defined, that is generically, is a subclass of artefact, namely the class of all artefacts which address our pictorial and/or ornamental intelligence. Visual art has sometimes been used, both

in ornament and imaggery, to imitate, intimate, mimic or idealise natural beuty, but often is otherwise engaged. The built, the farmed, the planned, the regulated, the managed environment is an artefact and there is now a great and growing international reaction to its desctructive effects on nature.

The environmentalist arguments have centred on health and safety, quite rightly, along with arguments about material loss of various other kinds, such as genetic. Material threat calls for material opposition. And yet there is clearly a place in this frame of mind for the arguments from beauty; along the line of, what sort of life is it if you cannot see and hear the nature for the artefact ? At the most basic level of concern, and as it directly connects with the cognitive approach to aesthetics presented here, consider the blunt facts of how we live in sound polluted days and light-polluted nights without often noticing this.

Fortunately, no matter how artificial the environment is made it is still possible to encounter nature as opposed to art without travelling to remote places. For example, even the gutter of a suburban street may give a sudden show to surprise you one day, say after some heavy summer rain has organised a scattering of builders' debris into a miniature landscape of meanders and alluvia. And there's bound to be a cranny in the masonry some where nearby with a cluster of 'weeds', which if left well alone may surpass, as Ruskin once observed, the finest works of art.

Verdict

Well, to sum up. Philosophy is guilty of failing to investigate and repudiate the bogus theories of art and aesthetics which have held sway throughout the 20th century. Indeed, Philosophy has participated in their promotion. These theories have foisted a particular taste in art upon us in the name of the good in art. This taste has metamorphosed convulsively from Greek poses to official items of the modernist canon. The theories generate absurdities such as : Pollock is a great artist; Escher is not an artist; 20th century art is what you find in galleries; aesthetics is primarily about fine art. The theories began by pursuing beauty in art and ended by pursuing an art without beauty. The theories insinuate that a universal significance attaches to their use of 'art' when actually tying this word down to the antics of artworld. Those antics, however entertaining they may be on occasion, provide only a highly specific and non-exemplary kind of art by contemporary standards. Philosophy has therefore abandoned beauty, nature and art. Far from elucidating an important and universal faculty of human consciousness it has signed up to a theory of art in modern times whose epistemology resembles the papal astronomy of mediaevaal times, but without either some facts of nature or a bible to curb it, an arbitrary authority.

Meanwhile, we are left with a real problem of knowledge to heal. How do we stop knowing that Picasso is the greatest artist of the 20th century and start noticing that the 20th century has put out the stars over our heads and drowned the warbling of birds? Ironically, the Greek meaning of 'aesthetic', which philosophy corrupted, is just the meaning relevant to the problem. We have to come, quite literally, to our senses.

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"Significant Form" in the Aesthetics of Clive Bell

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Clive Bell wrote the Preface to the first edition of *Art* in 1913, and in this book devised a theory through which theoretical lens post-Impression could be appreciated. In the Preface to the 1948 edition of *Art* Bell stated that when he wrote the book the "battle of post-Impressionism" had just begun :[1]

> The best that even Sickert would say for Cezanne, in 1911, was that he was "un grande rate, "while Sargent called him a "botcher", and the director of the Tate Gallery refused to hang is pictures. Van Gogh was denounced every day almost as an incompetent and vulgar madman; M. Jacques-Emile Blanche informed us that, when cleaning his palette, he often produced something better than a Gauguin; and when Roger Fry showed a Matisse to the Art-Workers Guild the cry went up "drink or drugs?"...Hark to Sickert : "Matisse has all the worst art-school tricks"...Picasso, like all Whistler's followers, has annexed Whistler's empty background without annexing the one quality by which Whistler made his empty background interesting.

With Bell, photographic exactitude of representation is not the desideratum of painting. By focusing on "significant form" in the work of artists such as those mentioned above, art-work may be evaluated without naturalistic representation as a criterion. Particular examples of Primitive and Oriental art may thus turn out to be valuable in their presentation of "significant form." (But as Bell himself later realized, in this period of reaction he tended to underrate Renaissance, 18th and 19th century arts.[2]) As John Hospers observes, however, Bell's main point is not to champion abstract art to the exclusion of naturalist art, but to exclude life values and to establish form as a necessary condition for artistic appreciation and achievement.[3]

The Bloomsbury Group, consisting of Bell and his friends, was in some ways influenced by G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*[4]. For example, following Moore he took "good" to mean an indefinable, non-natural property, and states : "Creating works of art is as direct a means to good as a human being can practice."[5] Good art would not, then, be art with a certain natural property or set of properties (such as roundness or smoothness) but art with "significant form". With respect to visual art, Bell developed the idea of significant form as "relations and combinitions of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms."[6]

As in Moore's conception of intuitive apprehension of "good" such relations and combinations are either intuitively perceived in the inspection of an art-work or not. In any case, according to Bell, reasons are not applicable to the determination of whether an object has significant form. As William G. Bywater observes for Bell : "The critic does not render judgments on the basis of norms and reasons, rather he turns his attention to the audience, guiding and animating it. His language is designed to bring about an experience of significant form; to bring about aesthetic experience."[7]

In Art Bell offered both an aesthetic and a metaphysical hypothesis. The former is the hypothesis that "the essential quality in a work of art is significant form."[8] The concept of significant form was articulated by Bell in order to solve what he took to be the central problem of aesthectics viz., providing a quality which is common and peculiar to all works of art. Thus, Bell emerged as an "essentialist" rathar than a "family resemblance" theorist with respect to the concept of art.[9] On the essentialist view there must be something common to all and only what is called "art" in order for that word to have any meaning. And since Bell held that the essence of art does not consist in a property or properties, he found it in the relations of "significant form".

As against those who would urge a search for the artist's intention by whatever means (e.g., exploring biographical accounts) as relevant to the understanding, interpretation, and/or evaluation of an art-work, Bell argued that in aesthetic appreciation "we need bring with us nothing from life."[10] In doing so he attempted to safegaurd the autonomy of art. On this view, "aesthetic isolationism," the work of art can and should stand on its own, and the aesthetic experience has nothing to do with cognitive considerations provided by extranneous material. This isolationist position is at odds with contextualism, the thesis that a work of art can only be appreciated by considering it in its social, historical, and cultural context.

Bell also put forth a metaphysical hypothesis stating : "significant form is the expression of a peculiar emotion felt for reality."[11] He suggested that art may be a manifestation of "man's sense of ultimate reality," thereby envisioning a link between art and religion.[12] Thus Bell predicted that, on the one hand, when significant form is rarely to be found in a period, religion, too, will be at low ebb and culture degenerate. On the other hand, when the sense of reality mentioned in the metaphysical hypothesis is achieved, people tend to value spiritual rather than materialistic concerns according to Bell. Thus, the spiritual and the aesthetic function in unison here. One might compare Bell with Tolstoy on this point. As a consequence of the close kinship between art and religion

envisioned, art- works are taken to be immediate means to good : art could not be immoral but must be moral or above morality on Bell's reasoning.[13]

Bywaer argued in favour of what he calls the "fruitless search" arguments of Kennick and Weitz.[14] While Kennick and Weitz emphasized the open-textured character of the ordinary concept of art, Bell is seen as recommending a revisionary concept. Specifically, Bywater argued against the "warehouse argument" of Kennick. Briefly, the warehouse argument asserts that, one instructed to remove all (and only) objects of art from a warehouse containing all sorts of things would have an easy task compared to one instructed to remove all (and only) objects of significant form from the warehouse. In defense of Bell, Bywater argued that it does not address the isue, since" no one needs to suppose that the average person will be able, without training and guidance to uderstand Bell's theory or to recognize something with significant form,"[15] Although Bywater was correct to point out that Kennick's argument needs to take this point into account, it is fair for Kennick to have raised the question of whether Bell's notion of "significant form" is sufficiently clear that even a trained observer would know what to look for in the hypothetical warehouse. Perhaps Bywater has missed Kennick's point, for the whole thrust of Kennick's point is not that the average person would not be able to pick out objects of significant form from the warehouse, but that even a trained observer could not do so.

Yet Bywater formulated an important criticism of Bell in pointing out that Bell runs the risk of diluting his formalism by removing our attention from the works of art themselves to the creative process of the artist in order to delineate a distinction between art and nature.[16] Bell held that a copy cannot be as moving as an original, since there is something in the mind of the artist which the copyist did not possess.

This is a puzzling idea coming from someone like Bell who is a non-Idealistic theoretician championing "significant form" rather than the intentions in the mind of an artistic genius. Presumably this "something in the mind" is not what Idealist aestheticians (such as Croce or Collingwood) might suppose. Not to put too fine a point on it, it appears that Bell is simply inconsistent here. His formalism cannot stand on its own if he must appeal to "something in the mind" to distinguish a copy from an original.

There are various difficulties with Bell's view. If one says that something is significant, it is appropriate to ask "Significant of what ?" But in the case of Bell's usage of "significant form," such a question cannot be answered. Thus it seems that, as Langer has noted, this is indeed a poor word choice.[17]

Beardsley, for one, has pointed out that there is a circularity in Bell's argument.18 While aesthetic emotion was defined by Bell as that which is

produced by significant form, significant form was defined as that which produces aesthetic emotion.

Bell's treatment of intention also deserves critical comment. He drives a wedge between the artist's intention to promote aesthetic emotion (the emotive) and intention to convey information (the cognitive) in his rejection of Italian Futurism.[19] By this move he unwittingly rejected much of traditional art, since often if not always traditional art has an informative even pedagogical function (e.g., pertaining to religious belief).

It might also be asked whether Bell believed that the intention to evoke aesthetic emotion underlies all works that he perceives as having significant form? If so, then how could it be consistent for Bell both to believe this and positively evaluate Primitive Art as such, in view of the possibility that the art of Primitives (deeply appreciated by Bell) be just as it is even if there never were anything so rarified as intentions to evoke aesthetic emotion underlying the production of Primitive Art?

When purely formal considerations are inadequate to show that a work of art is valuable, Bell slid toward expressionism (*e.g.*, when Cezanne's working out his salvation is taken into consideration[20]). And the various references to expressing significant form leave the impression that "form" is being substituted for "idea" in a revision of expression theory.

For the canonical or 19th century sxpression theory, a work of art is the direct expression of the artists' feelings or emotions, and at least only indirectly of influences on the artist from his society, including ideas forming a part of its climate of opinion.

From Wittgensteinian quarters a fundamental methodological critique is possible. Whereas Bell assumed an essentialist stance with respect to defining "art" by seeking a property common to all and only what is called "art" which on his analysis turns out to be the relational property of significant form--it might be objected that the concept of art is an "open-textured" concept and therefore Bell's approach is fundamentally mistken.[21]

Another possible criticism of Bell's position is to point to a problem in isolationist stance in regard to aesthetic appreciation. Since Bell held that nothing from life is relevant here, he may be charged with divorcing art from life and catering to those who know, and perhaps care to know, only what is directly given in sensation. There is, too, the concomitant danger of aesthetic cultism, which emphasizes some forms as "significant" on unclear grounds while ignoring and perhaps destroying others.

The relationship between Bell's aesthetic hypothesis and his metaphysical hypothesis is in need of clarification as well. Bell made a strong commitment

to the former and a weak commitment to the latter, wishing to keep them separate. But it is not clear that he can get away with giving such a weak commitment to the metaphysical hypothesis. For as soon as Bell was pressed to elucidate the notion of significant form (a notion which is far from clear in the chapter on the aesthetic hypothesis in Bell's work, *Art*), the only feature of his overall theory which allowed him to do so is the expressionistic slant of the metaphysical hypothesis. Significant form was then characterized as "the expression of a peculiar emotion felt for reality" as noted earlier. Thus the aesthetic hypothesis turns out to be parasitical upon the metaphysical hypothesis, with its unanalyzed notion of "reality" and implicit appeal to relgious sentiment.

While Bell's theory does indeed have the difficulties mentioned above, it has been historically important in justifying post- Impressionism. Clive Bell attempted to provide a clear account of aesthetic experience by sorting out emotions of a personal sort, reveries, and desires separately from aesthetic experience of art.[22]

Notes and References

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Aesthetes, Critics and the Aesthetic Attitude

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Is there anything psychologically special about aesthetic experience ? Are there any experiences had towards things which are, by virtue of their intrinsic qualities, aesthetic in nature ? Those who believe these questions to have positive answers espouse what I will call the Attitude Theory; viz., that aesthetic experience involves special psychological states or attitudes which are distinct from all other states or attitudes. Those who reject the Attitudes Theory hold that an experience is an aesthetic one only in virtue of the object of that experience - usually an artwork - and not because of some unique psychological quality. Another way of couching the disagreement is this : Attitude theorists characterize aesthetic experience essentially from the point of view of the subject's mind, while its critics define it in terms of some special qualities of the public objects of experience.

I do not intend to defend or refute the Attitude Theory. I do not think either can be done without begging the question. Rather, my purpose is to try to explain why there appears to be no compelling way of resolving any disagreement between its proponents and critics. What I will suggest is that the acceptance and rejection of the Attitude Theory are more like expressions of an ideological nature about aesthetic experience which remain outside the bounds of arbitration by argument.

These "aesthetic ideologies"[1] so-called are bodies of beliefs about the nature of aesthetic experience which draw upon concerns that lie outside the domain of aesthetics proper: e.g., (a) the accessibility of aesthetic experience (and relatedly the accessibility of art); (b) the quality of aesthetic experience; and (c) the value of aesthetic experience. Commitment to an ideology provides a way of dealing with certain large questions, such as "In what does aesthetic experience consist "" or "What constitutes aesthetic appreciation ?" and thus allows attention to be paid to more specific issues about the nature of aesthetic qualities or the notion of aesthetic judgment. The adoption of any one ideology, four of which I will outline later, provides a stance vis-a-vis the opening questions and thereby defines the boundaries of aesthetic experience.

Critics of the Attitude theory[2] often adopt a cluster of tactics in their battle against it. The first is the Introspectionist Counterattack which goes like this:

(1) The Attitude Theory entails that aesthetic experience cannot occur without the presence either of some special mental state (e.g. distancing) or some special aspect of an otherwise commonplace mental operation (e.g. unique varieties of sensing).

(2) But, I, the critic of the theory, have genuine aesthetic experiences without either special states or aspects of mind.

So, the Attitude theory is false.

The second, the Semantic Counterattack, shares the same first premise and conclusion as the above. Its second premise is:

(2') Any attempts to characterize such states involve linguistic muddles or simple nonsense or the unspeakable.

Thirdly, the Reductionist Counterattack supplies the second premise. This offensive has a Weak and a Strong formulation; viz.,

(Weak)(2") Any attempts to identify such states fail to show that they are distinct from or do not reduce to very ordinary states which are not specially aesthetic in quality.

(Strong)(2") There do not exist any mental states or operations other than the commonplace ones. Indeed, the only distinctions among mental states of a kind derive not from phenomenological differences but from the different objects entertained in experience.

Although I've not time to pursue the details of such manoeuvres, I'm sure that very few committed Attitude Theorists will pack their doctrinal bags and depart defeated and broken. On the contrary, the critic will be branded at best as question-begging and at worst as deluded about the essence of aesthetic experience.

An analogy begs audience. The Attitude Theorist is akin to a person who feels bound to describe the special state of being good and drunk. His critic is the lifelong teetotaller. The point at issue is the elusive state 'being drunk'. The enthusiast for drink might come up with an expression which he will claim stands for some mental condition without which one cannot enter the ranks of the drunken. The critic will latch onto the common mental denominator (e.g., dizziness or whatever), demonstrate its ordinariness, and then proceed to bring into open forum the true nature of the state—which he will do by means, presumably of some causal distinctions. "Being drunk" will reduce to "dizziness brought on by ingestion of alcohol". Although the enthusiast may consent to this formula, he knows that isn't the half of it, and he also knows that he cannot present any argument to the teetotaller to confirm that being drunk is rather special. The analogy is not complete. We require the teetotaller to drink. Suppose he does. Suppose also that he feels what the enthusiast feels. In this case, he

ceases to be a critic and joins the club of happy sots. Suppose, however, that in fact he just cannot get drunk (at least insofar as he fails to appreciate the enthusiast's reverence) but presumes that he must be because he has imbibed something with alcohol and got dizzy. He remains a critic and former condemns the muddled occultism of the brandy club. This impasse (and that is precisely what it is) betrays what can be called an "ideological" barrier.

II

The ideologies concerning me are these :

(a) The **aesthete's** view of the aesthetic,

(b) the **Bourgeois'** view of the aesthetic,

(c) the **Critic's** view of the aesthetic, and

(d) the **Democrat's** view of the aesthetic.

I will concentrate primarily on (A) and (C). It will become apparent that (D) and (B) are, respectively, Everyman's versions of these two.

Both (A) and (C) regard the accessibility of the aesthetic as limited to the select few. (B) and (D) regard aesthetic experience to be achievable by great numbers of people. For (A) and (C), aesthetic experience is usually memorable, and decidedly distinct in quality from ordinary perceptual experience. Both adherents will insist that a special receptivity is needed for aesthetic experience, although the nature of that power is vastly different for the two views. Both positions assume what might be called the intrinsic view of the aesthetic; ars gratia artist fits comfortably into either scheme and no shame is displayed at the suggestion that the aesthetic is a realm sui generis with its own qualities rules, and rewards. This, however, is where the alliances end.

For the aesthete, aesthetic experience is essentially an inner event, a physiological episode. The critic adopts an object- related conception of his experience. Furthermore, the aesthete responds primarily to the manifest content of his experience. With (A) we have revelation by encounter :

> We don't, generally speaking, simply see, hear, feel, taste, or otherwise apprehend beauty. Beauty is typically an attention-getter; we suddenly notice it; it breaks into our consciousness. Moreover it does so gratuitously; it does so despite the fact that we had no inkling it was going to be there... In these situations beauty always appears the "aggressor".... Beauty "catches" our attention; it "breaks on us"; it "leaps out" at us; it "strikes us". We seem powerless before its pull.[3]

The critic may, at times, be struck, but he is bound to check it out, to see whether he has been duped or not. Hence, we might say that (C) relies upon the discovery by analysis and interpretation of the latent content of the object. The aesthete eschews the whole process of studying such things. He is committed

to seek out those lucky moments when he is carried off by his striking encounter. In (A), indeed, the ultimate aim is to achieve a great experience:

> Beauty has a tremendous holding power for us. When we perceive a beautiful thing, we don't want to let it go, we never want to stop perceiving it. It is as if our eyes wanted to drown in the sight, our ears in the sound. When the beautiful thing has disappeared, or we have gone our way, we sense a loss, we feel let down. The structure of this feeling is remarkable like post-coital "melancholy".[4]

The critic does not see the aesthetic as continuous with his autobiography. He is dedicated to tracking down great works. This reliance upon the object of study makes (C) essentially intellectual in nature, discursive. Criticism is a skill, a craft, which can be done well or poorly, and which can be taught. The appreciation of the aesthetic under (C) can and ought to be expressed to others.

The aesthete has his own ways. Because his approach is quasi-hedonic[5] and reactive, because appreciation consists in the most private of savouring, (A) cannot be assimilated to the teachable skills of the critical analyst. There is almost an instinct which guides the aesthete, one which permits the most extravagantly sensitive reaction to phenomena which would normally be bypassed by most of us.[6] He, of course, cannot provide reasons for appreciation before the fact; nor would he want to. For (A), appreciation is a form of enchantment, often so fragile as to be destroyed (rather than enhanced) by discourse :

> The beauties that we commonly encounter are often so fleeting that most people do not want to risk spoiling the experience of them by discussing them.... Analyses and discussions of specific beauties seem stilted and pointless to all but the most determined of pedants and snobs.[7]

Clearly, for the aesthete one cannot procure an aesthetic experience merely by positioning oneself in front of something that happens to be held by all critics to be a masterpiece for all time. The aesthete not only does not need the critics; he can actually do without the masterpieces for all time as well. What he holds aestheticaally dear is a certain kind of experience itself, which is, for him, monumentally intense and memorable.

The aesthetic Attitude Theory is clearly a corollary of (A). Furthermore, unless one subscribes ideologically to (A), one is bound to have difficulty comprehending what on earth the Attitude Theorists are trying to describe. One must first think of the aesthete as having a coherent view of the aesthetic in order to accept meaningfully something like an aesthetic attitude.

(C) is subject to more scrutiny and controls than (A). The critic is part of a discursive community; the aesthete is very much a free and isolated agent. The critic must deal in justifiable criteria and must rationalize his appreciations

for them to deserve the name under this ideological banner. The value of aesthetic experience, then, for the critic will be determined by the professionally demonstrable greatness of the object of experience.

Another matter distinguishing the ideologies concerns attitudes toward the true extent of the aesthetic. It should be easy to see why, given (A), nothing is excluded. Because it is contingently possible for any object whatever to elicit in the right person at the right time the requisite enchantment, (A) is just not bound or inclined to draw any hard and fast lines between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic.[8] Nor will the aesthete consider for a moment any reason to uphold on aesthetic grounds a distinction between natural objects and works of art. What is pertinent are the qualities of things which happen to trigger off aesthetic response. If an artist can do as successful a job by means of his craft as a volcano can do on its own steam, then the artist is to be commended and encouraged. (That the aesthete can operate thus is testimony to his relative lack of concern with very human matters such as creativity. His appreciation of creativity (if he has it) will not likely be aesthetic in nature).

(C), of course, must distinguish between art and nature. One may be a literary critic, a music critic, an art critic, but one will fail utterly as a geological critic, an astronomical critic, or a zoological critic unless one happens to be a qualified geologist, astronomer, or zoologist. Most aestheticians aren't any of these things.

(C) is, as well, intrinsically culture-bound. The critic has a stake in the special status of Art. This Art becomes value-laden, as the vehicle of higher thoughts and sentiments, the product of complex skills, the manifestation of clever structures and symmetries. The tacit allegiance to art qua created mirrors the structured discipline of criticism itself. Nature is not the product of human craft; and whatever God is, He is not an artist :

> Works of art have an "inner life" which natural objects do not have... Speaking of the "inner life" of works of art was a way of referring to the conventional distinctions as to which of their aspects are properly appreciated and criticized and which are not. Natural objects lack this "inner life" because they are not embedded in the matrix of conventions in which works of art are.[9]

Criticism and appreciation are channeled and guided from the start. Equally revealing is this reflection of J.S. Ackerman by whom a style is conceived "as a class of related solutions to a problem - or responses to a challenge that may be said to begin whenever artists begin to pursue a problem or react to a challenge....".[10]

What is significant here is that art which necessarily manifests itself in specific styles is conceived as a form of problem-solving, an activity confined to intentional beings whose purpose and limitations can be delineated fairly clearly. Here, the dimensions of the aesthetic are bounded within the program of criticism, a view which can make sense only from within (C).

Something must be said about the place of feeling. We cannot ever conceive (A) without passion. Unlike the aesthete, who cannot relinquish affect, this is not necessarily an ingredient of (C).

> Aesthetic experience is always pleasant, but the pleasure is not always (perhaps not even usually) an affect; i.e., a feeling. We are frequently pleased by something without having a feeling of pleasure.. Many of our aesthetic experiences are without affective content.[11]

From the vantage point of (C), this must be true, even though an aesthete will reject it is misunderstanding of what aesthetic experience is. The (C) stand on affect is not without merit, however, and we would be hasty in dismissing the ideology as insensitive. Because (C) can accommodate an intellectual, problem-solving conception of art, it can offer reasons for appreciating much art that simply leave the aesthete cold.[12] Such art is essentially discursive and perhaps even replaceable by a crisply written provocative dissertation. (C) not only makes room for such works as art; it evaluates them and gives grounds for preference should such be required. The aesthete might well be left indifferent to these works—as will most people—but that is not the problem. The aesthete will never, via (A) alone,understand that these works have a point.Ironically, if the critic must limit himself by trying to confine the aesthetic to the artistic, the aesthete will have a far more restricted conception of art than the critic—unless he happens contingently to be captivated.

There are, of course, many other dimensions to these two outlooks. If I have made it seem as if the schism were like that between the gourmet and the nutritionist, I can only beg indulgence for the graphic value of caricature. My point has been to give atmosphere to what I perceive as an intractable breakdown in communication. One will note that what I've called (A) is not reducible to theories,analyses,and generalizations either about experience or its objects. Indeed, (A) outlooks commonly verge on appeals to the ineffable which, by definition, is not a fit topic for discussion.There is nothing particularly reprehensible about this; however,there is nothing much (A) can contribute to an analytical approach to experience which seeks guidelines, criteria, and evaluative schemes.

(C) on the other hand,cannot dismiss the aesthete's groundwork either as non-existent or muddled. The aesthete may not be terribly clear but he is not

so naive as to require unfamiliar descriptions of his experience while clumsily ignoring the obvious. The experience of the aesthetic for him is, indeed, one of the mysteries. So long as he can say that experience is not just a matter of listening attentively or making sure not to be distracted or exposing oneself to something with no ulterior motive, etc. then that itself should humble his detractor. After all, these species of studious attention are all pretty ordinary, easily recognizable for what they are and not likely to be confused with something rather more magnificent and stunning.

III

If the aesthete seeks private culture and the critic lasting culture, the bourgeois and democrat agree on a more instrumental view of the aesthetic, the consumer aspect. But they differ despite both being attitudes constitutive of mass culture.

I mentioned earlier that there are alliance between (B)and(C), on the hand, and (D)and (A) on the other.Recall, however, that insofar as (A)and (C) are elitist, specialized views,these are at odds with (B) and (D) for which aesthetic appreciation is an experience that can be had by all without too much fuss (as in (B) or without any fuss at all (as (D) has it).

I will have rather little to say about the democrat, the advocate of popular culture. This position is not infrequently denounced as vulgar,Philistine, crude,and superficial by those who should know better. A reconsideration of these complaints might follow upon exposure to the robust and unequivocal Curt Ducasse. Then again,it might not. Ducasse allows a conception of "the aesthetic connoisseur" whom we might identify either with the aesthete or critic depending upon the case.

> To call upon the aesthetic connoisseur for an answer to one's own questions of aesthetic worth is, when considered in broad daylight, as ludicrous a procedure as would be the letting some person whose taste in matters of cookery differs from ours, but who is a connoisseur of foods, while we are not, choose our dainties for us.what he may do for us to introduce us to delicate dishes of which we knew nothing.....But if after tasting these connoisseur's dishes we do not like them, or do not find them more enjoyable than our own familiar foods, we should be fools indeed to pick our menu, according to our gourmet's taste rather than our own. Coarse the latter may be called by him; but we too have a stock of poisoned, question-begging adjectives out of which we may with out of reputation call his taste perverse.[13]

How then do we determine what shall ultimately guide us in our pursuit of worthy aesthetic experience ? We must abide by the dictates of good taste, the existence of which is heartily endorsed by Ducasse:

> There is,of course, such a thing as good taste, and bad taste. But good taste,I submit,means either my taste, or the taste of people who are to my taste, or the taste of people to whose taste I want to be.[14]

Following this is a simple rule offered by way of suggesting the basis for the pursuit of beauty:

"For a ranking of beauties, there are available only such principles as the relative intensity of the pleasure felt, its relative duration, relative volume, and relative freedom from admixture of pain".[15] Pushpin lives. Bentham couldn't have said it better.

Before one reduces this to crass hedonism. a consideration must be entertained. True,(D) operates upon a principle of seeking out the quickest most accessible and enduring, most intense,and least complex kind of pleasure from art. But that it suggests pursuit of any art at all is itself miraculous if pleasure were merely conceived in the most obvious of forms. Pleasure is just not that monolithic and no hedonist has suggested that there is e.g., one and only one source of the most intense pleasure such that all men ought to pursue only that. The democrat seeks pleasure as the ultimum bonum But he finds that some kinds of pleasure can only be got from rock music or soap operas or canned spaghetti. Furthermore, these pleasures are, in themselves, special enough to warrant his spending time pursuing them even if that time might otherwise have been taken up with "more intense" pleasure, so-called.

I do not think (D) a genuine "attitude" toward or "view" about the aesthetic. Certainly, it leaves far behind a great many interesting aspects such as arise in (A) and(C) (e.g., the value placed in the search for novel aesthetic experience and the notion of expending skill to uncover greatness in an artwork) and seems to be crippled by its own simplicity. However, it is an outlook of sorts and does provide a notion of aesthetic experience. Democrats certainly hold no grudge against those who disagree with them unless they are instructed to change their ways. Nevertheless,the democrat has no notion of a boor as does his distant aesthetic relative, nor does he look very deeply into the quality of experience. The democrat though will not go far out of his way to achieve a certain special feeling, as does the aesthete, because, in the end, he does not really subscribe to any such psychological doctrine. Interestingly, he shares this idea of the basic ordinariness of feeling with his bourgeois brother, to whom we will now turn.

IV

The bourgeois seeks in his own mass way "proper" culture. Typically,conventionalist theories of art fall well within the bounds of (B). If the aesthetic attitude theories reflected dependence upon (A) and drew their strength from it,it will be easy to see why criticisms such as Dickie's hail from (B) which has sought spiritual guidance from (C).

Whereas the critic approaches the aesthetic as judge; the bourgeois approaches ideally as informed spectator.We have seen that the aesthete and democrat brother with art because there is in encounter with it some valuavle visceral experience to be had even if the nature and value of that experience vary vastly between the two. The critic seeks value in his discovery of the greatness of the work.It is no surprise that complexity- admittedly of a highly specialized sort appeals strongly.Consider the reflections of critic and theorist Leonard Meyer on greatness in music:

> Insofar as the intricate and subtle interconnections between musical events, whether simultaneous or successive, of a complex work involve considerable resistance and uncertainty- and presumably information- value is thereby created, This viewpoint seems more plausible when we consider that as we became more familiar with a complex work and are therefore better able to comprehend the permutations and interrelations among musical events, our enjoyment is increased.For the information we get out of the work is increased.

What reasons prompt the bourgeois to approach the aesthetic domain and in what does the value of his experience consist given the putative vacuum created by his eschewing the need for "affective content" in aesthetic experience? Since the normal spectator cannot hope to acquire equal standing with the experienced critic without giving up his law practice or assistant directorship or associate professorship in favor of a life of criticism, his own appreciation of the "intricate and subtle interconnections" will never be quite complete.

If an answer can be provided,I suspect it will lie in expression like "aspects of works of art we ought to attend to "and" which of their aspects are properly appreciation". Worthwhile exposure to art involves something very like a ritual. For example, the theater-goer is described as someone "who enters with certain expectations and knowledge about what he will experience and an understanding of how he should behave in the face of what he will experience".[17] The propriety invoked has nothing to do with etiquette; to have aesthetic experience,(B) requires that we learn the house rules of the art world. Aesthetic experience is conceived of as an achievement of sorts the successful acquisition of which comes with an understanding of the conventions governing the behaviour

of artists and audience, "the understanding.... that they are engaged in a certain kind of formal activity".[18]

This is strongly Wittgensteinian in flavour and is meant to be. It explains why (B) can dispense with affective reaction in its characterization of aesthetic experience. It can do so because the "experience" consists in participating in a certain kind of behaviour according to certain conventions.This requires no one to feel anything, let alone anything special. Furthermore, the objects of experience, the works of art, need not themselves be thought of as essentially expressive or affect-laden. The reliance upon commonplace emotions where these enter experience is also understandable. We would be stretching the point to say that the emotions felt and expressed in watching a chess match were special Chess-feeling distinct in inner quality from, say,Baseball-feelings. Similarly,(B) holds no truck with a class of Art--feeling distinct from all others.The only variable is the object of attention, the chess game, the baseball match, the exhibition, the quartet's performance- and that is precisely what replaces and neutralizes concern about any peculiarities such as there may be in the mental condition of spectator.

This notion of experience rests upon a person's ability to identify something as an aesthetic object.Once he can do so, so long as he pays attention to it and is not terribly and hopelessly distracted, then he has an aesthetic experience just by exposing himself to the object. An analogy is perhaps apt here between the bourgeois' aesthetic experience and the experience of a trained amateur bird-watcher. If there were such a thing as an "ornithological experience", it would be defined in terms of something like a background knowledge of different bird species, their distinctive marks and habits, and those circumstances where one is undistractedly bird-watching in a relatively efficient way. The catch with aesthetic experience is that it is putatively not so easy to single out a work of art as it is to single out a bird. In a way, however.(B) claims that it is not so difficult either. The bird-watcher ultimately relies upon evolution theory and taxonomy to define his class; the art-lover relies upon the cultural conventions and critical theories which make certain choice objects into worthy artworks.

What is important here is that (B) holds central the epistemic quality of aesthetic experience.Knowing that such-and-such an artwork has certain properties is integral to the bourgeois experience of art. One would expect the adherent to (B) to read literary criticism, record jackets notes,and histories of art. Such from part of the program of expanding one's knowledge Of the conventions. The idea of (B) would be to approach as possible the comprehensive expertise of the critic. Since that in practice is not feasible, the bourgeois places his faith in the conclusions of criticism in much the same way that the bird-watcher tacitly trusts the taxonomist.

The bourgeois believes that aesthetic experience is accessible to anyone who exposes himself studiously to accept art forms, thereby achieving informed perception. What is of interest in (B) is the object of perception itself and not what that object happens to do one. This is not to say that(B) shuns the affective power of the arts; but it is to say that that power is not compelling reason to expose oneself to art in particular. In a sense, the pleasure of aesthetic experience is almost educative for the bourgeois; it functions analogously to a physical fitness program or a trip to a spa. Aesthetic experience is good for one, but not necessarily because it is a source of pleasure pure and simple. If it were just that, then the valued call to further one's knowledge of the work would have to be underwritten by the promise that more study leads to more pleasure, Not only may this be false; it probably is false. At best, it is merely contingent and is certainly not going to be true for everyone. But if art is pleasant and elevating for (B), it cannot be extraordinarily so. Consider Dickie's chiding of those who choose what he regards as a false paradigm of aesthetic experience:

> In the overwhelming majority of cases(and this includes most of the experience of painting we either like or think good) paintings do not produce emotional feelings or expectations..... Instances that do produce feelings tend to stand out in memory and because they do, they have been taken as typical.[19]

Spoken like a committed bourgeois. The moral is that one must not expect to experience memorable feeling in the presence of art.If one does, that is a suspicious bonus and not linked intrinsically to aesthetic experience.

Of course, the aesthete is scandalized by all of this. To the suggestion that much of our experience of art consists in our having "cool' aesthetic experience", the aesthete replies that such people are probably without aesthetic sensitivity and so without aesthetic experience. Whether or not the aesthete relies upon a special state of mind, a special operation of some typical mental state, a special type of affective response, or what have you - whether indeed the aesthete backs an aesthetic attitude or aesthetic reaction view of experience--is immaterial. What becomes apparent here is that the very points at which communication ceases between (B) and (A) define what aesthetic experience happens genuinely to be.20

V

The account offered so far may seem impressionistic, but it does have a moral. Behind every theory purporting to capture the essence of aesthetic experience there lurks an aesthetic ideology. What makes these ideology what they are, are a number of assumptions some of which are partially philosophical but most of which are either psychological or value-dependent. Where such

assumptions fail to overlap, there one finds uncomprehending disagreement. I have tried to illustrate why attempts to rid aesthetics of the relevance of aesthetic attitude will work only in context where aesthetic is viewed as the handmaiden of criticism. That is, the putative incoherence and insignificance of the aesthetic attitude can figure prominently only when one assumes that art appreciation is primarily epistemic and not affective in nature. That assumption is one which never is nor can be the conclusion of any aesthetic argument. Furthermore, the desire to extirpate aeshetic attitudes insofar as they take on a tinge of the extraordinary will follow from the similarly unargued assumption that an experience unaccomponied by affect or professional knowledge can be an aesthetic one.

What, in effect, is at stake in these distinct ideologies is a conception of real essence of appreciation. It is not clear, however, whether there can be any truth about that beyond an exposure of and to the values which form an intrinsic part of its conception. Suffice it to say that what some adherents to (C) and (B) champion as bonafide appreciative experience would be regarded by the aesthete not only as falling far short of aesthetic appreciation but also as failing to count at all as an esthetically valuable experience.

If these rifts are merely terminological, so much the worse for aesthetics. If they rest on something more than words,aesthetics might well reduce to a topic in social psychology or axiology. Whatever the case there is no philosophical manoeuvre available across ideologies that does not beg the questions at issue.

The four aesthetic ideologies I have presented are, understandably, limiting cases. The complexity and compromise inherent in individual presentations allow no unequivocal pigeonholing; however, there is enough specific commitment in such cases to make profitable an attempt to understand their concerns in the light of these idealized simplifications. What the ideologies do is to underline one stubborn feature about the aesthetic; namely,different people experience and value the aesthetic in very different ways.Such differences are akin to those which encompass ways of responding to death or one's homeland or the future of our species. The worlds of the pessimist and the optimist, for example, have a certain amount of furniture in common, but what interests us about these worlds is that they vary in their apportionment of significance.Aeshetic outlooks resemble these value distributions to a large extent.

One matter I have taken to be central to aesthetic ideology is the nature and content of aesthetic experience. This in turn draws upon what is taken to be valuable in the pursuit of aesthetic experience.What I have tried to show is that the friction between those who emphasize and those who denigrate aesthetic attitudes is caused by failures on both sides to see either that such attitudes function either primitively and ineliminably or that they fail to function at all.

But all of this depends in turn upon just what one identifies as an aesthetic experience.

The matter is obviously circular. This should come as no surprise. Nor should it be thought odd that one cannot either analyze out or argue in the experience of aesthetic attitudes. So it is fruitless to embark upon a program of annihilation,just as it is awkward to suppose that claims like "Beauty expands our receptive faculty" or "We never want to stop perceiving a beautiful thing"can have any general title to truth. The accounts we have dealt with are rather more like reassurances to the already committed. As such they are perhaps interestingly descriptive of the details of their respective ideologies, but have no more combative force that does the cry that mankind is doomed in the presence of the beaming optimist.

How does one have aesthetic experience.? Many ways, it seems. What can one hope to get out of them? Many very different things, so it appears. If these answers seem the apotheosis of dullness, then their very boring obviousness concludes my case.[21]

Notes and References

1. Although the analogy may be strained, the relationship between these ideologies and aesthetics proper is meant to resemble that between various metaphysical outlooks (e.g.,empiricism) and the special problems arising from within which form the accepted contexts of discussion in epistemology, say, or the theory of action.
2. By far the most unequivocal source of criticism can be found in George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974)-henceforth,AA.. This work grew out of an earlier piece, "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude". *American Philosophical Quarterly* I (1964). Of related interest is J. Urmson, "What Makes a Situation Aesthetic", *PASS* XXXI (1957).
3. Guy Sircello, *A New Theory of Beauty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), P.19 Henceforth *NTB*
4. *NTB*, p.19
5. I say "quasi-hedonic" because of the appearance of pleasure- seeking. The aesthetic is not however so simplistic. He seeks out "experience"- novelty of reaction, even if that involves horror, disgust, and revulsion.
6. See *NITB* where Sircello aesthetically admires the 'elegant' beauty of high-voltage electricity towers (p.106).More poignant is his fixation upon "the gracefully swelling mound of beautifully smooth, creamy-white guts" of a squashed garden slug (p. 108).
7. *NTB*, p.128
8. "Because the sources of aesthetic experience make a difference for (C) it is no surprise that there is great concern about the "boundaries" of art.
9. *AA*, p.199.
10. J.S.Ackerman, "A Theory of style", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XX (1962), p.
11. *AA*, pp.190-1
12. One has only to think of some of the more iconoclastic contemporary works, such as those of Cage or Rauschenberg or Man Ray. Artworks that are at the same time works of criticism about the nature of art itself are easily assimilated under (C) because the value in such work derives more and more from critical rather than creative skill.

13. C.J. Ducasse, *The Philosophy of Art* (New York, 1929) from an extract in J. Hospers (ed.) *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p.292. Henceforth, *PA*
14. *PA*, p.296
15. *PA*, p.297
16. L.B. Meyer, ":Value and Greatness in Music", in *Music, the Art and Ideas*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1967), p.36
17. *AA*, p.
18. *AA*, p.174.
19. *AA*, p.191
20. It might appear that salvation is at hand if only we were to adopt a Pluralistic view; i.e., one which provides a disjunctive picture of the aesthetic domain. There are, however, two major problems with this:

(1) It is not clear that a pluralistic view is anything other than descriptive of the existing competition. Aesthetic ideologies are, as I conceive them,largely regulative and survive in part because of what they forbid from discussion.

(2) The various ideologies are indeed competitors; i.e., they are (in various groupings) mutually incompatible.

To adopt a disjunction of such views is tantamount to believing nothing in particular about the aesthetic because it amounts to accepting anything whatsoever. Such toleration might well verge on vacuity. The view I have adopted in this paper is a second- order one; viz., it is about the presence of the ideologies themselves rather than an overarching fifth option which would, I think, be self-defeating.

21. I thank John Baker and John Heintz for their helpful suggestions. Previous versions of this paper have been read at the Western Canadian Philosophical Association and the American Society for Aeshetics (Pacific Division) Conferences.

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Book Reviews

Mario J. Valdes (Ed.), *Toward a Theory of Comaprative Literature* (Selected papers presented in the Division of Theory of Literature at the XIth International Comparative Literature Congress), Peter Lang, New York etc., 1990, pb, pp. 275.

Theory of literature, as any other theory of any other branch of human learning, is "a system of assumption, accepted principles and rules of procedure which have been devised in order to explain the nature of a specific set of phenomena" that is called literature. As such, any serious theoretical approach to this set of phenomena called literature must be based on rigorous logical rules applied to demonstration, evidences and internal coherence of the phenomena concerned. Theory may mean also an abstract speculation. But the editor of the present volume interprets "theory" in the former sense, i.e., in the sense of a system of enquiry with its rigorous tool of application.

The papers collected in the volume are arranged under three distinct sections according to the issues they address : i) *Response to Comparative Problematics* deals with the nature of relation between literary theory and comparative literataure, ii) *Theoretical Models and Reflections on comparative Literary Study* works torward a theory of comparative literary study and iii) *Torward a Theory of Comparative Literary History* revaluates the premises and foundation of comparative literary history. The volume contains twenty-four papers in English and French and the list of authors includes prestigious scholars like Lubomir Dolezel among several others.

Anna Balakian in the essay "Literary Theory and Comparative Literature" opposes the dichotomy between literary history and literary theory and observes that in recent years the most prominent approach to literary study by the comparatists has been foundations of literary theories. Cross-cultural influences have been more effective than intracultural influences in signalling larger perspectives and framing methodological strategies for both literary history and criticism. But the author argues that although theory is a formidable and respected branch of learning, it should not be the sole aim of the

comparatists: its function should be referential in relation to comparative literature - those "who use the text out of context as a pretext for theory are dubious fellow travellers in the discipline of Comparative Literature until they learn to use theory as a means and not an end in the study of literary relationship which regards literature as a holistic entity".

Similarly, Haskell Block admits that recntly literary theory has been a cultural preoccupation of Comparative Literature, so much so that the autonomous view of theory dissolves the difference between literature and philosophy. Theory as a genre of comparative literature, because of its limitless spatio-temporal perspectives, pleads for a critical pluralism. It can help redefine both comparative literature and the literary theory itself. But Block is not happy with Eagleton's "touchstone" method by which he rejects the merit of Iser's *The Act of Reading* since it does not work "too well" with Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. This is not certainly the proper way that any theory can be validated. Gurbhagat Singh offers an enthusiastic suggestion for formulating an international literary theory by confronting the Western and Earstern (Indian and Chinese) literary signifiers. By a sweeping survey of both the traditions (obviously through secondary sources only) he observes that both the traditions are "haunted by the Other, i.e., an individual community, cosmic laws or the boundary situations (Jaspers) in which various beings are locked. The Eastern signifier makes its way to the Other through spontaneous bodily energy and the Western signifier through blocking this energy though it remains disturbed and engaged throughout". Therefore an integrated literary signifier can evolve out of the unification of both blocked and flowing libidinal energies of Desire - out of unification of Tantra, Freud, Marxism, the philosophical anthropology of Martin Buber and the semiotics of Saussure and Jacobson. But without any concrete outline for any such unification Singh's ideas appear only as an ineffectual angel flapping its wings in vain. His essay is written in the vein of a schoolmaster assigning a task to his students rather than as a critic addressing himself to the learned community of scholars.

Refreshingly original is the paper by Professor Lubomir Dolezel who works out a thesis which both illustrates the methodology of comparative literature and formulates a theory of fictional reference that explains the relationship between reality and its representations in both verbal and non-verbal arts. It is a solid contribution that both argues for and illustrates the merit of comparative literature in theory and practice and appears to be the best among all the contributions in English.

A. C. Sukla

Motilal Banarasidass (Delhi) Series on Performing Arts Vol. I : F. P. Richmond et al (eds.), *Indian Theatre* : Traditions of Performance, 1993, pp. 487; Vol. II : R.V.M. Baumer and J.R. Brandon (eds). *Sanskrit Drama in performance*, 1993, pp. 318; Vol. III: J. S. Hamilton, *Sitar Music in Calcutta* : An Ethnomusicological Study, 1994, pp.310; Vol. IV: Natalia Lidova, *Drama and Ritual of Early Hinduism*, 1994, pp. 141; Vol. V: Tarla Mehta, *Sanskrit Play Production in Ancient India*, 1995,pp. 446.

Under the general editorship of Professor Farley P. Richmond (Chairman of the Department of Theatre Arts University of New York, Stony Brook) a committed researcher on the Indian theatrical performances for the last twenty-five years, M/S MLBD Publishes have made heoric ventures in bringing out expensive volumes on various aspects of Indian theatrical performances from the classical period till date. Each volume is a collection of essays by different international teams of scholars who have expertised in both the theoretical and practical aspects. The editor's manifesto in the Foreward of the first volume indicates the aims and objects of this series : "India is one of the great repositories of performing arts, particulary those of the classical folk/ popular, devotional and modern traditions. The sheer enormity and diversity of its cultural expression in music, dance, dance/drama and theatre are the envy of many nations around the world. This series intends to assemble some of the best books now available on these subjects". First three volumes of the series are the Indian editions of their original publications by the University of Hawaii Press, Honululu 1990 and

1981 respectively and the 3rd one in Calgary,1989. But the uniformity that brings all the volumes under a single series is notably their style which is meant for both the specialist scholars and common readers. All of them are remarkably comprehensive, based on data meticulously collected, grounded on arguments both traditional and modern and understood and interpreted with a sense of great devotion and adoration for the cultural heritage they reflect.

The miracle of the first volume is its integrated approach to the whole range of theatrical performances- from the classical Sanskrit tradition to the contemporary regional practice ; in its six parts the volume highlights the origins and characteristics of Sanskrit theatre, the ritual traditions, the devotional or the *Lila* tradition, the folk tradition such as *Nautanki* and *Tamasha* and dance dramas/dramatic dances and the modern Indian theatre. The most impressive feature of this volume is that all the accounts offered are based on both library works and data collected by extensive tours and practical investigations all over the country. The venture is undoubtedly pioneering and the treatment is accurate, authentic and uncontroversial.

The second volume in its four parts offers more a theoretical account of the Sanskrit drama in performance based on critical texts and some examples found in the dramatic and poetic texts as well. Raghavan's eaasy is an authoritative demonstration of such treatment. Edwin Gerow and Eliot of Deutsch write on *Rasa* theory, Swana compares *rasa lila* with Sanskrit drama and besides two articles on the performance of Bhasa's *Vasavadatta* by Gandhi and Cravath, Richmond offers useful suggestions for the modern directors of Sanskrit plays. Both the 1st and 2nd volumes offer chapters on *Kuttiyatam* tradition that transgressed Bharata's rules.

Hamilton's account of the musical instrument called *Sitar* is an exhaustive one both in its historical survey and aesthetic analysis. The birth of Sitar from *Tambura* as projected by the author with its ethnologicall history is highly enlightening and the techniques of playing *ragas* on *Sitar* and its cognate instrument *Sarod* adopted in different Muslim and Hindu traditions or *gharanas* are explained with

masterly insight and wisdom.

Lidova's marvellous volume correlates the dramatic tradition both in its theoretical and performative aspects with Vedic ritual traditions. Unwilling to accept F.B.J. Kuiper's theory that the *Natyasastra* rituals were equivalent to the Vedic sacrifice, the author argues that Bharata does not apply the word *Yajna*, but the word *Puja* to the theoretical rites. She further observes that the different forms of drama such as *samavakara* and *Dima* are the stage versions of some myths such as those of "Churning of the Ocean"and the "Burning of Tripura"rather than any transformation of Vedic sacrificial rituals.

Mehta's researches are based on both literary texts including Sanskrit plays and texts on dramaturgy by Bharata, Dhananjaya and Nandikesvra etc. as also on empirical findings such as the "remnants of the ancient Sanskrit theatre design as still being presented and practised in the traditional and village theatres of India and South-East Asia, China and Japan". In the 1st four parts containing ten chapters the author elaborately deals with all the aspects of a Sanskrit play production such as the text, performer,auditorium,audience and performance as a whole and in the last part offers directions for producing some Sanskrit plays, which she collects from the plays themselves. A work of this design requires vast experience about a wide-ranging socio-cultural situation and the author aptly displays such qualifications as needed for such a venture.

Motilal Banarasidass publishers deserve our sincerest thanks for producing this series the volumes of which enlarge our intellectual and aesthetical dimensions about India's performing arts and their tradition.

K.C. Dash

Possible-Worlds in Literary Theory

Sture Allen (ed.), *Possible Worlds in Humanities, Arts and Sciences : Proceedigs of Nobel Symposium 65*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1989 pp.453 ; Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 244.

From Aristotle to Auerbach understanding and interpretation of the fictional world have been based on a mimetic model, i.e., the

fictional world has been matched either to actual particulars or to actual universals. In 1957 Ian Watt replaced mimesis by pseudomimesis. When he wrote sentences such as "Fielding lets us into Blifild's mind" or "We are given a highly detailed description of Grandison Hall", he did not matched the fictional particulars with a represented actual object or category, he assigned the fictional world rather to a source of representation, i.e., the author, presupposing that fictional worlds pre-exist the act of representation - in other words, suggesting that a fiction writer is a historian of pre-existing fictional realms.

But a systematic non-mimetic approach to the world of fiction has been attempted recently by the philosophers of logic and cultural semioticians drawing upon Leibniz's concept of "possible worlds" which evolves out of his analysis of necessity and contingency : a possible world is a world which God could have created. Since he created only the actual world, the world of our empirical experience, all other possible worlds exists only as ideas or conceivable worlds, and truths of reason which are necesssary hold all these conceivable worlds. Leibniz distinguishes between necessary and contingent truths ; "One is absolutely necessary, for its contrary implies a contradiction.... the other is necessary only *ex hypothesi*, and by accident, so to speak and this connection is contingent in itself when its contrast implies no contradiction. A connection of this kind is not based on pure ideas and under the simple understanding of God but also on his free decrees and on the sequence of events in the universe". Geometrical truth is necessary because its contrary implies contradiction. But the Roman general Caesar's crossing the Rubicon is not a necessary truth, because it's opposite "Caeser did not cross the Rubicon"is not contradictory and therefore is not impossible. It is not necessary in the sense that the complete concept (under the proper name) of Caeser might have chosen not to cross the Rubicon and yet would have been Caesar, although he would have been defeated by Pompey in that case. Therefore, according to Leibniz, there could have been a different world (from our actual world where Caesar crossed the Rubicon) where a person like Caesar would not

have crossed the Rubicon and would have therefore experienced its attended consequences, i.e., defeat by a man like Prompey. Geometrical concepts are both possible and necessary whereas historical facts are possible but contingent. The other such worlds as counter to our factual world are possible; and God could have created such worlds. Interestingly, Leibniz, justifies his ontology of the possible worlds by citing the worlds of literary fiction- "Nobody could deny that novels.. are possible" and he maintains that the different possible worlds are indepe-ndent of each other. According to him, therefore, each possible world being an alternate to the other, there is not mutual interference, and as such, the characters and events of one possible world are not compossible with those of other possible worlds. In other words, the characters, events and objects of the literary possible world (as those of the worlds of other arts) are not compossible with our actual world and should therefore not be understood and appreciated by any method of correspondence. Since it is impossible to assert the chronology of the possible worlds, the meaning and truth of one possible world are not to be determined by those of the other possible worlds. This rationalistic epistemology of Leibniz is a revolutionary attack on both the classical tradition of realism and the romantic tradition of mysti-cism. In understanding and appreciating the arts and literature if the age-old mimetic method is rejected, the mystic and genetic aspects of the romantic concept of poetic imagination is also replaced by the rationalist epistemology and logical ontology of Leibniz.

Leibniz is also respon-sible for discarding the one-world semantics in favour of a multi-world semantics for a successful interpretation and understanding of the art worlds. Although anti-referential proposals were offered by the critical concepts such as Russell's "empty terms",Frege's "pure essence", Saussure's "self-referentiality" and Richards' "pseudo statement" it was Saul Kripke who articulated the Leibnizian ontology and epistemology in modern times in interpreting the entire system of formal logic on the assumption that "our actual world is surrounded by an infinity of other possible worlds" and during the 1970s a number of

critics such as Lubomir Dolezel, Umberto Eco and Van Dijk attempted for the first time at interpreting the fictional worlds in terms of possible-worlds semantic. In August 1986 the Swedish Academy organised the 65th Nobel symposium on the Possible Worlds in which for the first time a galaxy of scholars from different disciplines focussed on the multidisciplinary aspects of this revolutionary area of knowledge : among others Thomas Kuhn and Jaakko Hintikka from philosophy, Barbara Partee and Ulf Teleman from linguistics, Lubomir Dolezel, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Samuel R. Levin, Arthur Danto and Umberto Eco from aesthetics, literary critiism and semiotics, J.S. Bell and Marteen J Rees from physics. The first volume under review is the collection of their contributions where Sture Allen the Editor recalls that the present symposium originated in an earlier Nobel Symposium on "Text Processing" concerning the problems , of communication such as text representation, text analysis and generation, and text typology and attribution. Since there are various media of communication in our Actual World such as natural languages in speech and writing, formal languages of mathematics and logic, programming languages, and the languages of the fine arts and music, the related point of significance that now emerges is the established relationship between man, the medium, the actual world and the possible world. "This includes", the editor writes, "the problem of representation or mimesis versus self-relativity or autonomy, as well as the fundamental question of whether a possible world created by art can be an instrument for understanding the actual world and, conversely, whether scientific theories and models can also be regarded as fictional in some way." This is a challenge to the age-old mode of human understanding of the world he lives in and its states of affairs he confronts in his day-to-day life.

Pinpointing the session on literature and arts, Professor Dolezel's, paper is an extraordinary one for its clarity of thought and for its skill of analysis. He distinguishes between a theory of poeticity and that of fictionality : self-referentiality is characteristic of poetry or of *langue*, not of fictionality; and

the theory of mimesis the oldest version of fictional semantics is a one-world semantics to be substituted by the possible worlds semantics which is a multiple-world semantics. A comprehensive theory of literary fiction will arise from a fusion of possible-worlds semantics with text theory of cultural snmiotics. Dolezel formulates three fundamental theses of literary fictional semantics which can be derived from the possible-worlds model frame : (1) fictional worlds are sets of possible states of affairs, (2) the set of fictional worlds is unlimited and maximally varied, (3) fictional worlds are accessible from the actual world. The principal merit of the possible-worlds fictional semantics lies in its concept of fictional reality which is determined not by reference / correspondence to the states of actual world affairs, but by its own logical structure, i.e., it should not be selfcontradictory. "The possible is wider than the actual", but "Worlds which imply contradictions are impossible, unthinkable, 'empty'. Fictional worlds are accessible from the actual world not physically but through the scmiotic channels - by means of information processing, i.e., in the formation of the fictional worlds actual world participates by providing models of its structure. But the actual world material undergoes a substantial transformation in being converted into non-actual possibles with all the logical, ontological, semantical consequences.

Dolezel further observes that the fictional worlds of literature are incomplete, semantically unhomogeneous and constructs of textual activity. There are two kinds of texts - descriptive and constructional. The former represent the actual world which pre-exists any textual activity, whereas the latter are prior to their worlds and these texts are called fictional texts in the functioanl sense : "they are actual texts with the potential of constructing fictional worlds".

Professor Wolterstorff, while discussing Dolezel's paper, comments that "a fictional world need not be *merely* possible ; it may be actual. It need not *even* be possible; it may be impossible". While he is unwilling to treat the worlds of fiction in terms of the possible worlds, he argues that the essence of fiction lies not in the world projected but in the

mode in which it is projected. He, however, appreciates Dolezel's emphasis on structure - worlds of works of fiction are structured in a wide variety of significantly different ways. But it seems self-contradictory to state that "even impossible worlds are not without significant structure". Dolezel's ideas, if correctly understood, imply that no world that lacks a logical structure (of uncontradiction) is possible. An impossible world, therefore cannot have any *signifiant* structure. Can an impossible world be possilbe ?

Ruth Ronen in her title *Possible-Worlds in Literary Theory* makes a pioneering venture in accounting systematically the influence of philosophical logic and aesthetics in formation of the concept of fictionality in literary studies in terms of possible worlds semantics. The work traces the sources, route and function of this influence. She acknowledges the influence of Dolezel on her present work as "immeasurable" and accordingly she defines and interprets the concepts of possible worlds and fictional worlds, discusses the possibility of fictional worlds, analyzes the ontological, logical and epistemological features of fiction and elaborates upon the ideas of fictional events, fictional perspective and fictional time - the domains of the fictional world. Her meticulous researches have been absolutely successful in turning fiction into a legitimate topic of philosophical discussion and making a "radical shift in a long tradition, from Plato to Russell, that viewed fiction as a sequence of proposition devoid of truth value or simply false."

"My primary concern..," writes the author," is not doing things but exposing inadequacies which emerge when interdisciplinary things are done with texts". She has intended to deduce a pragmatic theory of fiction from the theoretical works by philosophers and literary critics rather than drawing upon the literary works (fiction) themselves. What the reader gains from such theoretical analysis as this is a refreshingly new approach to artworld in general and literary fiction in particular. The relation between reality and art has been thoroughly reviewed. The postmodernist slogan for antifoundationism has been raised from altogether a different corner of

our intellectual world, i.e., we can understand and appreciate art without our search for a stable actuality as a reference point. Modes and degrees of reliance of art worlds on the real world reflect different representational conventions and not a fixed similarity.

A.C. Sukla

Horace L Fairlamb, *Critical Conditions*: Postmodernity and the Question of Foundation, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp.XI+271.

The author pinpoints his observations : "Postmodern anti-foundationism misidentifies the foundationist error, a misunderstanding which takes secondary problems for the essential problem" (p.16). An examination of Derrida, Foucault, Habermas, Gadamer, Rorty, Lyotard, Fish and other postmodern critics reveals that these anti-foundationists are themselves victims of an "unidentified heterological foundationim, an operation of necessary *Critical Conditions* that subverts *both* the error of strong foundationist closure and the totalisation of strong conventionalist relativity" (p.13). The only error of foundationism, according to the author, is its hope to "reduce the condition of knowledge to one kind of foundation instead of explaining the different but equally necessary conditons of knowledge and meaning"and he suggests that the foundationist theory is to account for three kinds of epistemic conditions-formal, objective and conventional, which he calls "heterological" ; and in the main body of the book, he examines how (a) the traditional reductive model of epistemology infects both the supporters and critics of foundationism, (b) the anti-foundationists criticise the traditional notion of foundations without having any clear notion of their own theoretical pressupposition and (c) a "heterological" model of critical conditions avoids these problems.

Coming to the American critical situation Fairlarmb notes that during the 50s critics like Crane, Frye, Wellek and Warren needed theoretical foundations. During even the mid-sixties various American critics responded to that need while structuralism was officially imported from the continental culture. But this optimism about foundations was first challenged by Derrida's debut in the Baltimore seminar on Structuralism. But Derrida's

deconstruction is simply an illusion of novelty for the Americans since it is merely the New Critical "close reading" had the New Critics understood their own practices with greater regor. Deconstruction is therefore not the "result of new methods, but of more thorough uses of old methods" of Brooks and Warren and hence is not necessarily an antifoundationist critical programme. The failure of these antifoundationist proposals is variously noted by Fairlamb : "Fish's radical hermeneutics condemns universalism, but constantly practices it (p.40) ..." Gadanmcer's vision of philosophical hermeneutics must have non-historical authority lest it reduce to *his* historically bound prejudices" (p..127). Finally he proposes a heterological foundationism which is "able to account for both what changes and what stays the same and thereby accounts for the both reductive foundationism and relativism" (p. 263).

Fairlamb's fold observations might appear conservative for the followers of the popular antifoundationism and critical iconoclasts. But the logical strength and common sense basis of his arguments sufficiently warrant our attention to identify both the truth and the illusory aspects of the influential critical fashion today. It makes us aware of the dangers that are sure to emerge in one's unconditional surrender to the absolute denial of necessary critical conditions. The book is a powerful antidote to the critical epidemic that breaks out to infect the whole range of human knowledge and experience.*Critical Conditions* is a timely publication to guard one's genuine critical interest against the possible intellectual heresy of any pseudo invention in aesthetical cognition as well as critical practices.

B.C.Dash

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